



Christian Courier

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School federation celebrates 75 years of Christian education

Alan Doerksen

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Although its member schools have changed much in the last 75 years, Christian Schools International (CSI) is working to remain true to its Reformed roots and its biblical approach to education.

There are several things that make CSI distinct from other Christian school organizations, according to executive director Sheri Haan. "The main distinctive is that CSI has its roots in the Reformed tradition," she says. CSI is "thoroughly biblical" in its approach and believes that "everything in God's world should be studied." Other Christian schools differ from this, and don't provide courses in subjects considered "worldly," like film.

Changing identity

Although many of CSI's schools have their roots in the Christian Reformed Church, today students come from "a very broad representation of denominations," says Haan. A wide variety of ethnic groups are also represented in CSI's schools.

In the early days of CSI, there was more of a contrast between urban and rural students and schools. "That divergence was so great, which posed problems," she says.

Originally, CSI's schools were looked on as "the Dutch church schools," but that identity has been changing, says Haan.

Now CSI has 117 member schools in Canada alone, whose students make up 25 per cent of

CSI's enrolment. CSI's member schools are divided into 13 districts: three in Canada and 10 in the U.S. CSI also works with a few overseas school, including one each in Japan, Korea and South Africa.

From books to pensions

CSI provides a wide variety of services to its member schools. It publishes textbooks and teacher guides, *Christian Home and School* magazine for parents and *Media Studies* newsletter for teachers.

CSI also provides counsel to newly started Christian schools, prepares standard tests for students and has placement services for school employees. It represents schools in shaping legislation at all levels of government, and administers



Sheri Haan, CSI's executive director

retirement and benefit plans for school employees.

"Our original mandate did not call for us to be involved in

the pension and insurance area," says Haan. "Today we have a full-fledged roster of such programs."

From national to international

CSI began in 1920 and was then known as the National Union of Christian Schools (NUCS). The first meeting took place on September 1, 1920, in the parlors of First Christian Reformed Church of Roseland, Illinois. At that meeting were representatives of 37 school associations, eight of which became charter members of the new union.

Over the years there have been a lot of structural changes to the organization, says Haan. One came in 1948, when NUCS

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Siberia: a cold place to live, a warm place to serve

Gertie Pool

ABBOTSFORD, B.C. — To most people, Siberia represents snow, below-zero temperatures, windswept landscapes and a place of exile.

But the hardships of snow-covered ground in minus 40c temperatures do not deter John

and Nancy Advocaat. For them, living in the heart of Siberia means seeing new Christians break through years of depression and hopelessness.

John Advocaat grew up in Abbotsford, B.C., graduated from Calvin College, and is a former teacher. Nancy is from

the Chicago area and also graduated from Calvin.

In the fall of 1990, John and Nancy began pioneering the Navigators Ministry to Siberia, an international U.S.-based outreach program.

Not one Christian

John's vision to make Jesus known to the people in Russia brought him to Novosibirsk, Siberia's largest city, which lies 2,000 miles east of Moscow.

On a four-day excursion John discovered how in this large city, with one-and-a-half million residents, not one single Christian could be found. They were totally secularized people.

While talking to university personnel through an interpreter, a professor of "scientific socialistic Marxism" begged John to come and explain the Bible to her students.

After a speech and some dialogue with the students, Ad-

voaat learned how since 1918 the communist government had been committed to the elimination of the knowledge of God in their society. But due to recent political change and renewed spiritual openness these friendly alert young intellectuals have become open to the Word of God.

Peer outreach

Moved by their experiences, the Advocaats returned home and rallied a team of 23 short-term missionaries to live among Siberians and discuss the claims of Christ with them. The team decided to begin its work in the small, elite city of Akadem-

gorodok and leave the nearby downtown area of Novosibirsk for the second round.

A group of professionals — a psychologist, Bible teacher, school teacher, computer

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John and Nancy Advocaat on location in their mission field: Akademgorodok, Siberia

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News

New challenges face Christian Schools

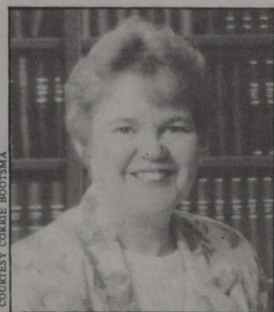
...continued from page 1

moved its headquarters from Chicago to Grand Rapids, Mich. Another big change came in 1978, when NUCS became CSI. The reason for the name change was the many new member schools in Canada, says Marge Slachter, also of CSI. With a more international focus, it was no longer fitting to use the old name.

Asked if support for Christian schools is declining or increasing among Christian Reformed people, Haan comments, "I think support for Christian education is as strong as it ever was. It's being shared by a broader range of communities."

Technology

One trend Haan sees in CSI's schools is "the addition of technology. Computer education has become a stronger component." These days, CSI is being challenged to explain Christianity in new ways, she says.



COURTESY CORRIE BOOTSMA

Corrie Bootsma

On the horizon is a plan to help establish Christian schools in Hungary. CSI representatives will soon be traveling to Hungary and Romania to train Christian teachers there. CSI also continues to publish new textbooks in many subject areas.

In July, the organization will hold its second-ever International Conference on Christian Education in Chicago. The first

was held in 1992 in Toronto and the next will be in Seattle in 2000. The Chicago conference is designed for teachers, administrators, pastors and school board members who are involved with Christian education. The theme is "Called to Remember — Challenged to Serve." The conference will focus on the heritage of Christian schools, as well as changes the schools should consider so that Christian education will remain viable in the future.

Open to feedback

Several examples of CSI's 117 member schools in Canada are Holland Marsh District Christian School, in Newmarket, Ont., and the Edmonton Christian Schools. Holland Marsh school, started in 1943, joined CSI in 1956, says principal Corrie Bootsma. CSI provides some curriculum materials to the school as well as teacher placement services

and a pension plan.

What impresses Bootsma the most about CSI is "they are open to feedback and responses." The organization even reads and responds to the school's newsletter, she says. Bootsma also appreciates CSI's pension and benefits.

Enrolment at Holland Marsh has gone "from 10 per cent to 30 per cent non-Christian Reformed" in the last 10 years, says Bootsma. At present, two-thirds of the students are from a CRC background, with the rest coming from Pentecostal, Baptist, Alliance and other Protestant churches. A challenge for the school is "keeping the Reformed vision alive," she says.

Proven track record

Edmonton Christian Schools are three schools which have been part of CSI since 1949. "CSI provides us with everything from professional support

to sponsoring professional development for staff," says director of development Peter Prinsen. "I think CSI has a proven track record."

Holding steady?

At the Edmonton schools, about 60 per cent of the students are Christian Reformed, with many others coming from Alliance, Baptist or Roman Catholic churches. Denominationally, the school is becoming more diverse and "that is something our board is definitely interested in," says Prinsen. Asked about CRC interest in Christian education, he comments: "At present, it's plateaued."

The Edmonton schools began their existence in the basement of First Christian Reformed Church in Edmonton — a beginning similar to that of CSI itself.

Siberian students and professionals converted

...continued from page 1

technician, nurse, dentist, businessperson and architect, along with students — spent two weeks moving among their peers, establishing relationships with people of like professions.

After two months, the group witnessed 32 conversions of both students and professionals. Investigative Bible studies continued among the architects, dentists and psychologists. Other businesspeople and their spouses began to investigate for the first time the reality of having a sincere relationship

with God.

"Until 1987 there were no known believers in Akademgorodok, which is this well-known centre of science and learning outside of Novosibirsk," says Advocaat. "As of June 1991 there were fewer than five. Now, praise be to God, we have a healthy group of new believers who are doing in-depth Bible studies on their own."

Two-track ministry

However, the group became acutely aware of how much

more work needed to be done in remote areas and among the leadership of existing churches in the region.

The Navigator Ministry decided to set up a two-track ministry. One aimed at working with pastors and the blue-collar believers of existing churches. The other would try to evangelize Russia's intellectual society.

A Russian church discipleship summer mission plan emerged. Fourteen "disciple makers" volunteered to train lay leaders in nine different cities in how to develop small groups for Christian growth. The group divided into seven sub-teams of

two, each with a Russian interpreter, to create networks with Baptist churches in urban and small remote villages.

Equipped with an excellent Russian version of a six-course Bible study series based on Colossians 2:7, the groups helped more than 200 prepare to make disciples for Jesus.

The program, which has become a success, will by the end of this year be helping over 50 churches.

Once the mission had taken firm roots in Akademgorodok and long-term help had arrived for the Advocaats, John, Nancy and their son, David, moved to

the downtown section of Novosibirsk to begin the second part of their journey.

Christianity unique

In due time the ministry saw fruits. There have been 100 conversions at the universities; at least 50 have, in turn, led someone else to Christ. John witnessed almost 400 Siberians come to Christ and become actively involved evangelizing families and friends in surrounding areas. He dares anyone to compete in a Bible quiz with one of the new Russian converts.

After 16 years of ministering in Germany and five years in Siberia, it is Advocaat's view that the claims of Christianity can stand up to the best-educated in the world.

"Christianity is unique among all religions," he says. "Christianity proclaims that God is searching for us. All other religions teach that we must go searching for God."

With visible emotion he concludes, "There are so many other large cities in Russia where people are just as open and ready to hear the gospel. If only someone would tell them the Good News."

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Maranatha Homes Burlington, Ont.

This award-winning Senior Citizen Home is located close to Burlington Christian Reformed Church and Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church, with audio hook-up for the Sunday services in every apartment from both churches and a weekly evening video church service presentation. Local bus service at the door. Monthly rent is geared to income. Maximum \$450 a month.

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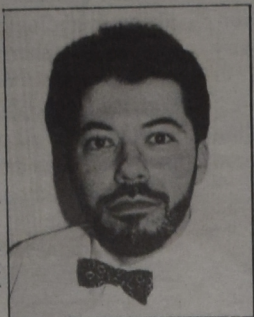
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Politics/News

Tunes to get you humming

POLITICS

David Koyzis



Virtually every country on earth has a national anthem. These patriotic hymns are of variable quality, with texts ranging from the inane to the inspiring, and music ranging from the banal to the boisterous. Typically a country's anthem is sung in march time to facilitate its use in parades. But at least three countries — Great Britain, the U.S. and Greece — possess anthems written in waltz time, demanding that citizens either stand and sing or possibly even dance!

Some countries boast more than one anthem. Canada has both a national anthem ("O Canada") and a royal anthem ("God Save the Queen"). The former is sung more frequently than the latter, which seems largely to be reserved for Remembrance Day services or royal visits. "O Canada" is quite singable by ordinary Canadians, but not by Las Vegas nightclub singers, who have been known on occasion to lose the melody after a hard day of drinking and gambling.

Furthermore, "O Canada" is distinctive for having two texts in two different languages, neither text having much to do with the other. This is perhaps a perfect symbol of a country where national unity consists of people with vastly different aspirations pretending to share a common vision.

Americans have several patriotic songs that might qualify as national anthems. When I was a schoolboy in the U.S. every morning we sang "My Country 'Tis of Thee." It uses the same tune as "God Save the Queen," but that fact was hidden from us at that time. "America the Beautiful" and "God Bless America" remain favorites of most Americans.

American anthem a vocal-chord killer

But the official anthem is, of course, "The Star-Spangled Banner." Its tune was taken from a drinking song; its text describes a battle with that "enemy," Canada.

Many Americans are happy to try to sing their anthem, but someone with average vocal talent is unlikely to be able to hit the high notes, which seem to demand the skills of an opera singer. Hence a succession of soloists is brought in to do the job. Most of them manage to scale these musical heights without shattering the lenses of television cameras, but these soloists often have vibratos wide enough to drive a pickup through.

Some Americans have grown so exasperated with their anthem that they have demanded another be chosen. For example, "America the Beautiful" is not in the least bellicose and is content to describe in simple but eloquent terms the beauty of the land and its history.

A good but idle tune available

But I have a different suggestion. Why not adopt another tune for "The Star-Spangled Banner"? One just happens to be available. Most of us probably recognize the former Soviet national anthem from Olympic ceremonies. It's a perfectly fine tune with an upbeat rhythm. But it's now an anthem without a country.

A couple of years ago, I discovered quite by accident that, with only minor modifications and some stretching here and there, the words to "The Star Spangled Banner" can be sung to the tune of "Unbreakable Union of Freeborn Republics"!

Wouldn't this be a fitting way to lay the Cold War to rest: American citizens would finally have an anthem they could sing, and an idle tune would finally be put to good use.

David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont., and expects that both Bill Clinton and Newt Gingrich will greet his proposal with enthusiasm.

B.C. passes strict laws against abortion protesters

Alan Doerksen

VANCOUVER, B.C. — Pro-life groups in B.C. are calling the NDP government's new Access to Abortion Services Act "draconian" because of its strong restrictions on anti-abortion protests.

The act, also known as Bill 48, calls for restricted access zones around abortion clinics, doctor's offices and private homes of doctors who perform abortions. Within these zones, people would be prohibited from engaging in "sidewalk interference," which the act defines as "advising or persuading, or attempting to advise or persuade, a person to refrain from making use of abortion services, or informing... a person concerning issues related to abortion services by any means, including, without limitation, graphic, verbal or written means."

Infringement on freedom

The act also forbids the filming, videotaping or sketching of abortion doctors or patients in the access zones "for the purpose of dissuading that person from providing, facilitating the provision of, or using abortion services." There is also a restriction against people repeatedly phoning or sending fax or computer messages to abortion providers to dissuade them from their work. First-time offenders could be fined up to

\$5,000, imprisoned for up to six months, or both.

Paul Ramsey, B.C.'s Health Minister, defends the act saying, "Women in this province are increasingly faced with intimidation and harassment when they go to seek a legal medical service." Ramsey says the bill is designed to balance the right of women to obtain abortions with the rights of others to freedom of speech. But pro-life groups in BC are strongly opposed to the bill.

"Is this an infringement on a person's rights that they can't walk on a street, that they can't talk to the people that they would like to talk to...? Of course it is," says John Hof, president of Campaign Life Coalition of B.C. He calls the new bill "draconian."

Ted Gerk, president of the Pro-life Society of B.C., calls the legislation "the most restrictive in North America.... We are opposed to the new act unequivocally."

The new act is "not allowing anything that is peaceful," says Gerk. "Pro-lifers are not breaking the laws, so they're going to invent laws." By enforcing the new law, the government will be "sweeping peaceful people off the streets," says Gerk.

Gerk has no doubt the new law was introduced in response to the shooting last fall of Garson Romalis, a Vancouver doctor who performs abortions.

Romalis was shot in his own home and suffered a shattered leg. He is facing more surgery, still cannot work, and supports the new bill.

Pro-lifers blamed for doctor shooting

The B.C. government has blamed the pro-life movement for the shooting, but Gerk says, "the police still have no leads, no motive" for the crime. "I don't think violence is a problem in the pro-life movement," says Gerk.

Still, "pro-life groups in B.C. have received death threats" in response to the shooting, he says. Gerk has faith in the Vancouver police to solve the shooting case and says that those making threats against pro-lifers are "going to need to be held responsible for the comments they're making."

A recent *Globe and Mail* article speculated that the new bill was introduced to divide opposition parties on the issue of abortion on the eve of a provincial election. Gerk says he would not be surprised if that is the case, and suggests that abortion rights will be a big issue in the next election.

A very different group, the B.C. Civil Liberties Association, supports the government's goals of providing safe access by women to abortion, but accuses the government of going too far and stifling freedom of speech. In a recent press release the association objects to the act because "first, it gives Cabinet the power to create access zones around clinics and hospitals in secret. Citizens are thus unable to scrutinize the process...."

"Second, it prohibits activities within those zones which we judge should be allowed — namely, advising persons not to access abortions, providing information about abortions, and picketing or handing out leaflets related to abortion."

As an alternative to the act, the association recommends the government seek injunctions on behalf of clinics on a case-by-case basis, a process it describes as "open for all to scrutinize."

The association also encourages the government to provide for police to enforce the existing law, which it considers to be sufficient.

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Editorials

Never ask how much money he has

Why is it that so many people in our community are afraid to talk about their finances? Whenever it comes to their bank accounts and investments, they become extremely secretive.

People will tell you all kinds of personal things, things which have to do with their children and grandchildren, though they may be selective in what they will reveal. But ask them about their money, which is probably one of the least personal things a person can talk about, and there comes that little gleam in their eyes and that notion in their head that now you have gone too far. My money is none of your business!

A pastor said to me recently: "There were at one time three things our people never talked about: sex, faith and money. Now they freely

talk about sex, and they're even beginning to talk about their faith; but don't ask them about their money. That's off limits."

"Why do you think that is?" I asked him. "Are they afraid that they will create jealousy among friends?"

"There is already a lot of jealousy out there," was his answer. "I think they know that telling others how much money they have makes them responsible."

A question of modesty?

I suppose one could argue that being secretive about one's money could be a form of modesty. After all, nobody likes someone who boasts about how much he or she possesses. Riches, like beauty, should be quietly worn . . . and shared. But surely, there ought to be times when one can openly say: this is how much I make; this is how much I spend; this is how much I owe; this is how much I have saved. Christians especially ought to welcome opportunities for being held accountable.

Money is a source of power. And those who have a lot of it don't mind it if people around them respect them for that power, but they don't want others to know the details, the nitty-gritty of that power source. And maybe those who have little money are ashamed of their little power.

Some of the rich in our communities reveal their wealth in the homes and clothing they

acquire or in the vacations they can afford. But quite a few don't — they're hoarding up money for their children. The pastor I talked to says it's almost pathological how many parents worry about the inheritance they will leave their children instead of sharing some of that money with needy people and worthy organizations.

But almost all rich people reveal their wealth in the cars they drive.

Why does money play such a powerful and secretive role in our communities? After all, what is money but a means of exchanging essential resources: the power to work or produce in exchange for the power to buy food and clothing? Money is so unimportant to our lives that only a little of it is needed to keep us alive and none of it can follow us into the life to come.

Maybe we are so secretive about our bank accounts and investments because they function as little household gods, like the ones Laban used to worship besides his wealth. When Rachel took her father's icons along, she was careful to do so secretly. When a search was conducted, she pretended to have a period so she could stay in bed where the gods had been hidden.

It seems that a lot of Christian Reformed men and women suffer from monthly menstruation when it comes to admitting they may be hiding little Mammons in their beds!

BW

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God likes people with flexible necks

How's your neck, lately? Are you able to turn your head freely without pain and effort? And while we're in that top region of your body, how's your forehead? Blinding to look at?

The reason I ask is that I've been told that there's an outbreak of metallitis in the church. I got the notion from reading a few verses in Isaiah.

In Isaiah 48:4 we read how God is telling his people that the sinews of their neck are iron. Israel must really have been a stiff-necked people. Imagine having iron sinews in your neck! You can't move your head at all. It sits there frozen on top of your body.

In addition, Israel's forehead is bronze, says God. Nothing penetrates. The people deflect everything the Lord tells them.

I don't know what the Israelites had been eating, but whatever it was, it contained too much metal.

Of course, God never leaves his people with just a diagnosis. Being a true healer, he always comes through with a prescription for better health. All we have to do is turn a few pages in the book of Isaiah and there it is: "This is the one I esteem," the Lord says, in Isaiah 66:2b, "he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word."

In order to be humble you can't have a stiff neck with iron sinews, of course. Humble and contrite people bow their heads before the Lord. And people who tremble at God's word do not have bronze foreheads. Instead of deflecting God's instructions, they absorb them and respond in wholesome fear. They tremble at his Word.

So you see, it's all in the neck and the forehead. Keep them soft. Keep them supple. Avoid spiritual metallitis.

BW

Letters

Decries the losing of old values

I would like to wish you all the very best in your ventures. I read about your newspaper in the *Toronto Star*.

I agree on this matter [of spanking children]. But wait until the bleeding hearts start phoning you or writing. Perhaps [if we took your advice] we would have had a better society today; we wouldn't have young punks who kill church ministers [as in Quebec].

I am of the Ukrainian Orthodox faith and we still go by

our old ways. If we keep cutting back and changing we'll have nothing left in the end.

A case in point: here in Toronto, the rock musical "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat" — a mockery. Years ago there was also the rock musical "Jesus Christ Superstar." During Easter on one of the cable stations there was also a rock Easter story about the death of Jesus.

Just think what would happen if someone in the Islam

faith would do this [in regards to their religion]. Heads would roll, for sure. No wonder the youth are all mixed up these days. They are getting mixed messages from the system.

Here in North York certain public schools no longer have Christmas events, but "winter happenings." Easter is a "spring happening"; next Thanksgiving will be "Harvest Day." That sounds like a Red country. They say the kids are all different.

But if others don't like it they can open up their own schools.

No wonder in the U.S. Christian movements are growing! People want a future for their grandchildren. We all know about the former Soviet Union: all there is changing very fast these days; and religion is permitted. But here in North America it's plain shocking.

Poignant sign-off

I am a short-wave radio

operator. I also work and take care of my dear wife, Lidia, who is under medical care. Our son, a teenager, stays at an autism centre.

We have been married 19 years. I am still holding on but at times it's very hard taking care of a wife who is mentally ill.

God bless you all.

Peter Krochmaluk
North York, Ont.

50th Anniversary Rearview Mirror



Calvinist Contact: July 1, 1960

Long before the natural home gardening craze, CC advised readers — complete with illustration — that they'd get better home-grown tomatoes by mulching.

PROTECT TOMATOES BY MULCHING

TOMATOES are grown in more home gardens than any other vegetable. One easy assist gardeners can give their tomatoes is to mulch them.

It is well worth the small amount of trouble it entails. A mulch protects the roots against the drying out of soil due to wind and sun. It keeps the fruit clean. Perhaps, most important of all, it helps to prevent blossom-end rot.

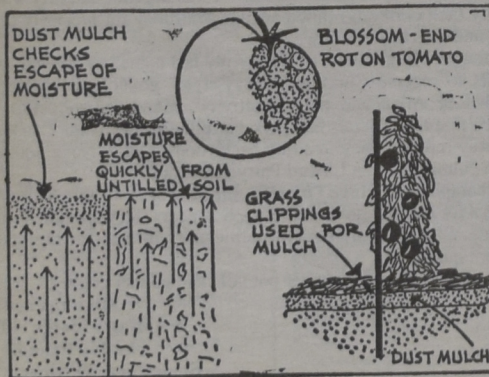
This rot is illustrated in the accompanying Garden-Graph. It first appears as a water-soaked area on the blossom end of the fruit. Next, the affected area turns brown or black and shrivels.

Blossom-end rot is the result of breakdown of the cells

of the fruit caused, it is believed, by improper soil moisture conditions and an uneven supply of water.

The most effective way to apply the mulch is, first, scratch up the soil so that it is loose around each plant; second, place the mulch material on the loosened soil around each plant and along the row.

Excellent results can be obtained from a heavy mulch of dry lawn clippings, applied a little at a time. The first application should be well mixed with the top soil, and then it may be built up to several inches in thickness, so that weeds are kept down and evaporation checked, but at the same time rains are allowed to penetrate the soil.



Would Jesus spank a child?

Regarding your editorial as quoted in the June 17 issue of the *Toronto Star*:

"Spanking may be more helpful in producing a healthy fear of the Lord (who also can get angry and does punish those he loves) than the ever-kind and patient words of a 'non-violent' parent who has been brainwashed into thinking that physical punishment constitutes a violation of the child's body and personhood."

While reading Mark 10:15, I asked myself a question. When Jesus was talking to the children, if one child had acci-

dently stepped upon another child's toe, crushing it on the stone, would Jesus spank the careless child on her bare bottom publicly?

Would he wait until he could spank her in private?

Would he spank her only if she were his daughter?

Jesus would probably focus his attention on the injured child and he would make sure that the two children were still the best of friends. He might even later preach, using the incident as an example of what can happen between adults if they inadvertently injure

another; and how important it is to rush to the aid of the injured and to reconcile both parties before further injuries occur.

As parents, we have a duty to teach our children that compassion and forgiveness must never be replaced by anger and punishment.

With all due respect, I think that your view, as published in the *Toronto Star*, is mistaken. Let's both of us pray over this one.

William C. Balfour
Brampton, Ont.

Irrelevant and incorrect identification

While reading an article entitled "Thibaudeau's argument arose out of feminist position, says Posthumus" (CC, June 16), I was quite surprised to read, in introducing Linda Leenders, the following: "Leenders...a member of AWARE (a group of Christian Reformed homosexuals)"

The subject of the article was two recent Supreme Court rulings concerning taxation of child support payments of divorced couples (which are by law defined as heterosexual). I have two concerns about the manner in which Ms. Leenders was introduced.

The first concerns the description of AWARE, i.e., a group of Christian Reformed homosexuals. In fact, the membership of AWARE includes both Christian Reformed folk and those from other denominations. It also has members who are gay and those who are not.

Secondly, and more importantly, I fail to see what Ms. Leenders' sexual orientation or affiliation with groups serving

the needs of those struggling with this very personal and difficult issue has to do with her opinion on the topic at hand. Mr. Wietse Posthumus, Mr. Harry Antonides and Mr. Gerald Vandezande were also mentioned in the article, yet the sexual orientation of these gentlemen was (appropriately) not commented on.

I feel you have done a disservice both to your article and to Ms. Leenders by introducing this topic in such an off-hand way. Did you feel that Ms. Leenders' sexual orientation or membership in AWARE had some impact on her contribution to the debate in question? If so, what?

As presented, your information does little more than introduce information about Ms. Leenders which is, to some of your readers, very controversial, while bringing no further enlightenment to the article's topic or Ms. Leenders' authority to speak on that topic.

Cynthia Frazee,
Toronto, Ont.

Response:

Originally the article on the two Supreme Court rulings (on taxation of child support payments and medical coverage for common-law couples) was tied in with a June 9 article on the Supreme Court ruling on gay rights. The three rulings had come out the same week.

But because of space problems in the June 9 issue we separated the ruling on gay rights section of the article from the other two rulings and published the latter two in the June 16 issue. However, by doing so, we inadvertently left in the identification of Ms. Leenders as a member of AWARE, which had made sense in connection with gay rights, but no longer made sense in connection with the other two issues.

And instead of saying that AWARE is a group of Christian Reformed homosexuals, we should have said that AWARE is a Christian Reformed-oriented support group for homosexuals. Our mistake in both instances.

Editor

Letters/Opinion

The anarchy of Internet is refreshing

I was disappointed in Mr. Hielema's reflections on the Internet. I don't think he has spent enough time examining the culture of the Internet, or reading the discussions or analyzing the technical and legal implications.

First, Mr. Hielema seems to see the Internet and commercial on-line services such as Compuserve as being interchangeable and identical. In fact, true net surfers find Compuserve and America On-line wimpy, commercialized and expensive. (Aside from the basic connect fees, almost all Internet services are free.) Compuserve is to the Internet what a corner variety store is to downtown Hong Kong.

Mr. Hielema states that the process of finding information is daunting. I have had exactly the opposite experience. With good software (like *Netscape*, a World Wide Web browser) you can find almost any information you want in a few seconds, download it, print it, or "hot-link" (jump) to other related

topics. For example, I was able to download reports on Synod '95 the very evening of each session by loading Netscape and telling it to find "Calvin College." My 12-year-old son regularly downloads lyrics of songs by his favorite musicians, also without difficulty. I required information on repetitive strain injury for our workplace health and safety committee: I found what I was looking for in a few seconds.

Substantive and communal

But these are technical quibbles. Mr. Hielema's more substantial charge is that the content of the Internet is mere "data," not information, and not really interesting or important. If Mr. Hielema would log into a few of the thousands of newsgroups, I'm sure he would find a large volume of lively, interesting discussion of substantive issues. In fact, there is something about the rhythm of downloading, reading, replying and uploading that contributes

to sparkling debate, wit and intelligent discussion.

I believe the effect of the Internet on a person's sense of community is exactly the opposite of what Mr. Hielema says. You can quickly find groups of people who share your passionate interest in any particular topic. And contrary to what most people believe, these correspondents often end up meeting each other face to face, to socialize or to put their ideas into action, or even to get married.

Yes, the Internet is in a state of lawless anarchy. I admit, I find that refreshing. Television, newspapers and even radio are all highly regulated and controlled by large, faceless corporations. The result is a lot of shallow inanity. The Internet at present allows more freedom of expression than any other medium and, for all its faults, I am glad that neither the government nor commercial interests are able to control it.

I could go on and on. It is little known, for example, that

computer bulletin boards played a significant role in the liberation of Eastern Europe. China is now poised to allow Internet services into the country (because it is seen as essential for economic growth), which will spell an end to the government's totalitarian control over the media. I think it is fabulous that people from all over the world are able to exchange ideas and information, unfiltered, unfettered and uncensored.

Great opportunity for Christians

Yes, sinners have access too, but, in the end, that may not be a bad thing. Is it better to censor a Zundel and establish a precedence for government control over information, or to expose his ideas and discredit them before all the world?

How odd that 40 years after television invaded our homes and caused a general panic among intellectuals who feared that literacy would soon be dead, many of these same intel-

lectuals attack the Internet which, if anything, has raised literacy to unparalleled heights. One commentator has even called the Internet the "revenge of the nerds," because participants can be judged only on the content and expression of their thoughts — not on the basis of their athletic ability, looks, or wealth.

The Internet provides Christians with a tremendous opportunity to reach out across denominational boundaries and build a worldwide community of believers — if we are able to see beyond our divisive political and social issues to the core of beliefs we all share. Imagine being able to co-ordinate relief work, mission activities and information services for Christian agencies from Ontario to Texas to Ethiopia.

I think we ought to get involved. In fact, I think *Christian Courier* should have a "home page."

Bill Van Dyk
Kitchener, Ont.

Postscript to the Internet debate

Marian Van Til

I'm glad Bill Van Dyk questioned Bert Hielema's negative assumptions about the Internet. Bill's analysis of the value of the Internet nicely provides the other side of the electronic coin. However, Bill labors under a few assumptions himself which could stand correcting, it seems to me.

Bill wrote: "...True net surfers find Compuserve and America OnLine wimpy, commercialized and expensive. (Aside from the basic connect fees, almost all Internet services are free.) Compuserve is to the Internet what a corner variety store is to downtown Hong Kong."

"True net surfers" — among whose rarified company Bill presumably places himself — may have that snobbish attitude, but it's hardly justified by facts at this point in online history.

I am a "net surfer" (a "false" one, I guess) who gets access to the Net via America OnLine (AOL) — I can't speak for Compuserve.

I pay a monthly connect fee

of just \$10.95 (US). (The fee in Canada is the same, plus exchange.) I connect to a local access phone number and so pay no long distance charges nor communications surcharges (which, I admit, may not be possible in parts of Canada).

No additional fees

Aside from the basic connect fees, not almost all, but all services AOL offers are free — including multimedia services, high speed access to the Internet and the recent addition of a World Wide Web browser. I don't see anything wimpy about that. I do pay a small additional amount (\$2.60/hour) if I use more hours per month than allotted. But downloading or printing documents and e-mail and then reading them offline means that doesn't happen very often.

Besides helping the user make sense of the millions of things available on the Internet without having to be a technonerd, AOL itself offers many services and forums which are useful, interesting and educa-

tional, set up to make them instantly accessible and easy to navigate. To name just a few: "Christianity Online" (a series of publications and forums run by *Christianity Today*); Eeasy Sabre flight reservations (I can check American Airlines' reservation computers, reserve a flight to anywhere, on any airline, and have my tickets sent to me); "Chicago Online" (a host of services and publications from Chicago, my home city).

Given all that, I see little advantage to joining a "freenet" or paying for software like Netscape when I already have access to everything I need via AOL. Well, I guess there is my reputation to consider as a less than true-blue net surfer. But you can't win 'em all!

By the way, I get 10 free hours of online time from AOL if I sign up a friend. Anybody interested...? :-)

I was almost kidding, honest!

OK, CC, your intrepid reporter kindly quoted me as informing the gathered throng of Canadians that all of Alberta hates the Liberals (CC, June 16). This was said rather tongue in cheek. Eastern types love a good Western alienation angle to any slow news week.

No doubt the cheerless proponents of political correctness are marshalling their fax machines to persuade Allan "Boom Boom" Rock to send his shock troops over to my acreage demanding no less than my unregistered "gopher elimination device" and my tongue.

As the Liberals merrily shot-gun piecemeal pieces of legislation (and 14 of their own MPs) out of the Commons, it should be noted that only several years ago it was the Liberal Party who piously (and correctly) railed against Mulroney for precisely the same undemocratic tactics.

I thought I might have to change my last name to Dingwall or Dupuis to receive Chretien "Chevy-style" government protection before Allan and his "sensitivity" squad arrived, until I learned that the Liberals had pork-barrelled all the Trans Canada Highway repair money to a tiny backwoods road in Nova Scotia which culminates in a Liberal Party gift shop.

To paraphrase George Orwell's *Animal Farm*: "The new boss seems a lot like the old boss." Yep, it appears the warm air front blowing west from the eastern politicians still has that familiar pungent quality!

Greetings from over yonder pot hole and gopher colony.

Mike Loenen
in hiding with his old
buddy Rushdie
Somewhere in Alberta

Film Review

Media/Arts

Pocahontas a pleasant story, but it's not history

Marian Van Til

Pocahontas

Rated Family
Directed by Mike Gabriel and Eric Goldberg
Voices by Irene Bedard, Judy Kuhn, Mel Gibson, David Ogden Stiers, John Kassir, Russell Means, Christian Bale, Linda Hunt, Danny Mann
Produced by Walt Disney

Pocahontas is Walt Disney Studios' first animated children's film based on historical characters. To ensure that the film would be a hit, with audiences if not with critics, Disney staged a huge publicity push, including an opening weekend in New York's Central Park with the film shown on huge outdoor screens to thousands of kids and their parents. Afterwards, as you went to your favorite fast-food joint (or toy or department store) you could pick up stuffed animals and all manner of other merchandise based on Pocahontas characters.

Hype and cash register receipts aside, is this animated blockbuster any good?

If one judges quality by whether this children's feature is historically accurate, then the answer is most certainly No. Some critics say historical accuracy shouldn't be an issue here. After all, Shakespeare took historical liberties too. If the story line is cogent, if it has an obvious moral lesson for kids while being entertaining, if the action is dramatic and the animation effective, it's a "good" movie.

Skewing history

Those factors are indeed necessary to contribute to a worthwhile children's film, but this isn't Shakespeare, and kids tend to equate what they see on the screen with the truth. "Misinformation" about historical events and figures may skew a child's view of history, often continuing to effect his or her adult views.

So I believe it's important to tell the stories of historical figures accurately; or, to let kids know: these characters were real people but this story we're telling you about them is make-believe.

In the film, Pocahontas (the

daughter of a native chief), and Captain John Smith (an English adventurer) fall in love. It's around 1605 and the English have landed to look for gold and to establish what will be Jamestown and the Virginia colony.

Soon Pocahontas intervenes and saves Smith from execution for causing the death of the young brave whom Pocahontas is supposed to marry.

not the first) edition of his biography.

Though the film-Pocahontas looks like a sexually mature buxom beauty, the real Pocahontas would have been between 10 and 14 when she met John Smith. And with both her father's blessing and the consent of Virginia governor Thomas Dale, she married another Englishman in 1614, a young widower named John Rolfe.

A year later the couple had a son, Thomas, and sailed to England for a visit. Pocahontas had become a celebrity of sorts and even had an audience with the King and Queen. While in London she visited with John Smith, who had returned to England in 1609. The story ends sadly and prematurely. As the Rolfes prepared to return to Virginia in 1617, Pocahontas contracted small-pox, from which she died. She is buried at St. George's Church, Gravesend.

This portrait of Pocahontas was painted in England shortly before her death in 1617.



This portrait of Pocahontas was painted in England shortly before her death in 1617.

Pocahontas' intervention creates peace between the natives and Englishmen, she and Smith declare their love for each other, Smith sails back to England a wiser man, and Pocahontas stays behind, alone.

She loved another

Only one element of that scenario is likely true: historical accounts show that Pocahontas made efforts which were helpful in getting her own people, other native tribes, and the new white settlers to live in peace.

But Pocahontas (who was the daughter of Chief Powhatan, the leader of a federation of Algonquin tribes) did not fall in love with John Smith and she undoubtedly did not save his life, as he claimed in the second (but

Natives not savages

Pocahontas does, at least, try to present the natives fairly. They respect nature (Smith changes his utilitarian attitude under Pocahontas' tutelage), worship its spirits and fight only when threatened. For the first time in an animated feature the Indians are not the bad guys. The movie does a decent job of showing up stereotypical attitudes. One captivating and well-composed song especially demonstrates how each side sees the other.

Pocahontas' conversion to Christianity, a sensitive issue these days, is understandably not mentioned. She became a devout Anglican and she and Rolfe were married in the Anglican Church at Jamestown.

Stick with the raccoon and the hummer

Do the action and characters make this an exciting film?



They will for young children; but for others, only to a point. There's the inevitable white/native clash, Pocahontas' intervention to save John, her conversations with a talking willow tree, and — the best and only funny part of the film, done in the best Disney cartoon

tradition — the silly antics of her pet Raccoon and humming bird. As expected, the animation is first-rate.

But Pocahontas' romance with Smith is inexplicable. He's not a particularly likable or bright fellow (the most likable thing about him is Mel Gibson's voice). We can only conclude Pocahontas is attracted to what the film presents as forbidden fruit. Her less than astute reason for shunning the warrior her father approves is that "he's so serious." Though she gets angry at the quick-triggered chap who kills him, she doesn't shed a tear, and nor do the audience kids. Is seriousness a capital offense?

On the whole, Pocahontas is a strong, self-possessed role model for children and is one of the few female lead characters in an animated feature; she surely is the only non-white lead I can recall. Thus she is particularly affirming for girls of all races.

Still, I was dismayed to see that there were few boys in the audience. Boys seem to think that focussing on a girl equals a "girl's movie," which is sissy and unenjoyable. Girls rarely make the corresponding assumption when the lead character is a boy. If this film was politically correct, the audience wasn't.

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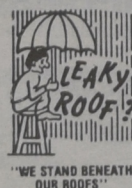


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Church

Korean Catholic women diverge from church teachings: survey

Marian Van Til

SEOUL, South Korea — Results of what is thought to be the first opinion survey of Korean Catholic women show some serious divergences from orthodox teaching and practice.

The Korean Catholic Women's Community for a New World commissioned a survey to ask Catholic women about their religious practices, per-

sonal beliefs and political attitudes. About 1,000 women responded to the survey conducted over a three-month period earlier this year, reports Catholic News Service.

Korean society is strongly patriarchal and values tradition. But the survey responses show that women are casting off traditional mindsets, says the Korean Catholic Women's

Community for a New World. When asked, "Are women able to lead men?" 80 per cent of respondents said Yes. When asked if women should always be homemakers and men always work outside the home, 70 per cent said No.

A shocking abortion rate

The survey revealed surprisingly lax views and practices on

various important issues in theology and practice: 65 per cent admitted they never read the Bible; 40 per cent answered "Who are the people of God?" by saying, "All people"; nearly 40 per cent agreed that women should be ordained priests, with younger women giving the highest percentage of positive responses to this question.

Most shocking, perhaps, was the admission by 70 per cent of the survey's married women that they have had abortions; and 27 per cent have had more than one. Among converts to Catholicism, 37 per cent said they had an abortion before

baptism; but a substantially higher percentage — 47.4 per cent — admitted having one after joining the church. More than half the women said they use contraceptives; only 11.2 have tried the natural birth control method supported by the church.

It is not known whether the Vatican has seen or responded to the survey and its results.

The Women's Community which commissioned the survey say the results indicate that the church needs a new vision for women and their place in the church.

South Korean religious leaders gather to protest police raids

SEOUL, South Korea (EP) — Religious groups in South Korea gathered in Seoul in mid-June to protest a raid on a Buddhist temple and a Catholic cathedral.

Approximately 100 Buddhist and Catholic priests gathered to demonstrate against the June 6 raid and to demand an apology from President Kim Young-Sam.

"We believe religious sanctuaries should be protected to promote the sound development of society and demand that the President apologize and punish those responsible for the raid,"

the priests said in a statement issued to the press.

Police stormed Myongdong Cathedral and the Chogyue Buddhist temple in Seoul and arrested 13 union leaders from Korea Telecom (KT), the state-run domestic phone monopoly. The union members are opposed to the government's plan to privatize the KT; the union leaders had taken refuge in the cathedral and the temple for about two weeks before they were arrested for organizing a 10-day sit-in protest of the government's plan. Protests involving state-firms are illegal in

South Korea.

State prosecutors said the union's action against the KT threatened to cripple the nation's communications systems during the local elections to be held June 27, the first in 35 years.

"Throwing police troops into the church yard shows that in our society the logic of strength still prevails over the spirit of dialogue," Cardinal Stephen Kim, the nation's Catholic leader said at a mass in the cathedral.

Hungary pledges to return nationalized property to Christians and Jews

BUDAPEST, Hungary (EP) — The prime minister of Hungary has pledged to return Jewish and Christian property worth millions of dollars. The property was first seized by Hungarian Nazi collaborators and later nationalized by the Communist government.

Prime Minister Gyula Horn made the agreement after meeting with members of the World Jewish Congress (WJC) in New York in early June.

The agreement requires Horn to order government working committees to start separate talks next month with Jewish, Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist church leaders on the future of approximately 5,000 pieces of property, some of which had been turned into swimming pools and farms.

Horn pledged that an agreement would be made by September 30 and that all religious property would be returned to its rightful owners within a decade. Property that cannot be returned will be paid for within 20 years. Property that once belonged to individuals will be handled through Hungary's privatization laws.

The WJC had said in a recent report that the East European governments were stalling on the issue of confiscated property. Members of the WJC are calling the recent agreement a major breakthrough in its fight to have the countries of Eastern Europe return nationalized property.

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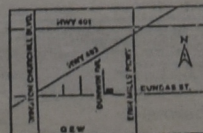
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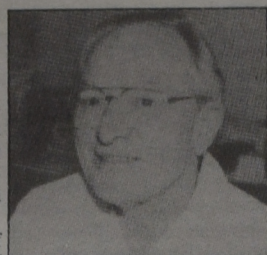
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The vague message of Bible printers



It's becoming difficult to find a "black letter edition" of the Bible in your Christian bookstore. But the Bibles in which the words of Jesus are printed in red letters are increasingly popular. You can buy the red letter editions in any version (King James or New King James, New International, Revised Standard Version, etc.) and from most publishers.

Who started this business of printing Bibles with the words of Jesus in red letters? I don't know, but it came from the side of the Bible printers. And why was it done? Probably because it was a feature that attracted buyers. People liked it. And publishers need customers. After all, selling English Bibles to North America is a huge business. Zondervan had sales of \$55 million in 1994 for the NIV alone.

Leaving the wrong impression

I think it is unwise and improper to print the words of Jesus in red letters because nobody knows what it means and it suggests all sorts of bad things about the Bible.

If the publisher's hidden claim is that the red letters are the very literal words of Jesus, the claim is untrue. The words which we have received are reliable but they are the writer's (or: a tradition's) version of Jesus' words. Even the words Jesus spoke in "the Lord's Prayer" or the words he spoke at the institution of "the Lord's Supper" are not exactly alike in our sources (e.g. Matt. 6:9-13, Luke 9:2-4 and compare Matt. 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:19-23, with 1 Cor. 11:24-25).

If the red letters are supposed to tell us that these words have more authority than the words printed in black, the claim is again untrue. The whole Bible is the Word of God. All of the Bible was ultimately authored by God and all of the Bible was also authored by people.

And if the red letters have something to do with importance and authority, why aren't the words of God the Father printed in red? Why not the Ten Commandments? Sometimes, when the speech of the Father and the Son appear next to each other, the red letters are particularly odd. For instance, in the story of Jesus' baptism, Jesus says to John: "It is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness" — words which are printed in red. But the words of the Father — "This is my Son whom I love..." — are printed in black.

Reading only what you like

Maybe the red letters have nothing to do with greater importance and authority, but they are intended to help us find our favorite passages. That would raise another range of fears and cautions. Having favorite teachings makes people and churches judge the whole Bible by their little Bible. (Having a canon within the canon, we call it.)

The four Gospels are the heart of the Bible for every Christian because they present the words and works of God in Christ. But we need what precedes the Gospels or the life of Jesus has no context. And we need what follows the Gospels or we would not know how to interpret his works.

Bible publishers should print the Book black on white so that every word is given equal respect.

New 'secret law' in Uzbekistan restricts religious literature

Barbara Baker

ISTANBUL, Turkey (NNI) — The Central Asian Republic of Uzbekistan has tightened its restrictions against the importation and printing of religious literature in recent weeks through the implementation of what one observer called a new "one-sided law" against Christian materials.

A church leader in the capital of Tashkent told NNI in May that a new "secret" law has been shown to an Uzbek Christian involved in the shipping and printing of Christian literature.

The Christian was shown the text of this new law regulating religious literature, but not allowed to make any copy of it, the source said.

Such a policy of secrecy, commonly employed under the former Soviet regime, reportedly enables Uzbek government officials to enforce or revise the application of the law as they see fit.

"This makes it more powerful than the laws that are public, because, it's totally flexible," said one Uzbekistan observer.

The law first required all religious literature shipped into Uzbekistan to be checked by

KGB security police officials. If the printed matter was found to contain anything against Islam, the shipment's recipients were to be arrested, the source said.

In addition, any foreigner involved with religious literature ruled to be offensive to Islam was to be deported from Uzbekistan.

Finally, according to the Christian who saw the code, no religious literature was to be printed inside Uzbekistan without receiving prior permission from the Central Asia Spiritual Muslim Union.

Aimed at Christians

The government of President Islam Karimov has shown marked opposition to the use of any Christian literature or films in the Uzbek language, part of a prohibition against evangelism to avoid religious tensions among the populace. A former Communist Party leader, Karimov has used nominal Islam to shore up his government's legitimacy during the past three years, although at the same time he has clamped down firmly against Muslim extremists who want to establish an Islamic state in the country.

Although the Uzbek Con-

stitution guarantees freedom of conscience and religion, the government prohibited — but failed to define — "missionary activities" in an ambiguous 1991 law that also declared citizens could "profess and spread their faith."

Islamic capital of region

With 22.6 million people, Uzbekistan is Central Asia's most populous nation and the acknowledged Islamic capital of the region. Some 68 per cent of the population is Sunni Muslim, although in the wake of the fall of communism, a quarter of the multi-ethnic population claims to be "non-religious."

Most of the country's Christians, who comprise less than five per cent of the population, are from Slavic, Korean or other small immigrant minorities. Although recent Western claims that as many as 34,000 Uzbeks have converted to Christianity in the past three years appear inflated, local Christians confirm that several hundred Uzbek converts are now involved in small church groups or home fellowships throughout the country.

South African Christian group fears 'secular state'

Richard Nyberg

GABORONE, Botswana (NNI) — Various Christian leaders have formed a new coalition which they say defends religious freedom in South Africa and raises support against a "secular state" concept which is set to be incorporated in the country's new constitution.

The Christian Voice was launched May 4 at a meeting attended by representatives of "all Christian denominations," according to the organization's secretary, Willie Viljoen. A previous organizational meeting of 55 church leaders was held on April 20.

In a faxed statement to NNI, Viljoen described The Christian Voice as a "non-political organization of concerned Christians whose main purpose is to make Christians aware of the dangers of a secular state and to encourage them to actively par-

ticipate in addressing relevant issues of concern in the writing of the new constitution of the New South Africa."

Based in Durbanville near Cape Town, The Christian Voice coordinated a May 18 "Rally for Religious Freedom" held a "National Day of Prayer and Fasting" on May 29 and a "March for Religious Freedom to Parliament" on May 30.

The group took out a paid advertisement in the *Cape Times* newspaper on May 12. The ad asserted that plans to make South Africa a secular state could threaten the freedom of citizens, as there would be no acknowledgement of God in the constitution and churches and other religious groups would not be allowed to hold services in any state building.

Differences of opinion

According to a brochure published by the organization,

"There are 40 countries which are officially Islamic states because the majority of their population adheres to the Muslim religion. Why then, can South Africa not be recognized as a Christian nation when 75 per cent of the citizens of South Africa claim to be Christians?"

The Christian Voice suggests that Christians should stand for an acknowledgement of God in the preamble to the constitution, "that religious freedom be guaranteed in all private and public places, that Satanism and occultism are not recognized as religions and that the 'interfaith movement' be strongly opposed."

However, many other Christian leaders, including Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu, oppose establishing Christianity as the state religion. President Mandella is also opposed to the move.

Environment

The trees of the Lord tell a story

Big things have a way of catching your attention — sales of the *Guinness Book of World Records* make that clear. I noticed the other day that the local football team had taken the field. I quickly saw that this wasn't an ordinary collection of young men. These guys were huge! I often see football players on a TV screen, but seldom at ground level, 20 metres away.

In person we can't help but notice big things, whether football players or big trees in the forest. If I see trees only in small pictures or on the tube I can easily miss the majesty of these creatures. So whenever possible, I like to visit big trees. And there is more to them than meets the eye.

Trees of renown

People have been using big trees to record their own activities for a long time. Peter Pangman carved his name in a lodgepole pine when he arrived in Alberta in 1790; so did Sir George Simpson, governor of the Hudson Bay Company, in 1841. The native tradition was to remove all but the topmost branches from a lobster tree to signal a friendship or truce. One that was trimmed by the Stoney Indians in the 1870s is still visible.

The oldest tree in Alberta is a thousand-year-old limber pine, the "Whirlpool Point Pine." This twisted beauty is perched on a rocky ledge beside a river, away from fire or human tread. In this protected place it has given up size but found longevity.

In western North America, where many of the world's giant trees live, we have made special displays of these monsters. The first real "drive-throughs" were not restaurants, but trees. I remember the huge ancient cedar north of Seattle beside the highway to Vancouver. Cars could turn out to pass, one at a time, through its immense girth. This tree grew to enormous proportions under ideal conditions in the rich, river-bottom soils. It was so impressive that few wanted it left behind when the highway was relocated. The stump is now sundered from top and roots; it has been moved several miles

to a new rest stop along the interstate freeway — a monument to a peculiar view of preservation.

Bookmarks in the history of God

Trees mark off some of the most important events in Scripture. Abraham planted a tamarisk tree where he called on the name of the Lord. Joshua wrote the words of the Lord in a book and set up a great stone under an oak tree to note the occasion. When David met and killed Goliath it was in a valley named for its trees. And Gideon had a life-changing exchange with God under a well-known oak tree on his father's land.

In ancient trees we can read the past, like bookmarks in the story of God. They literally log strategic events and remind us of the call of God on our lives. We often act like these crea-

Environmental

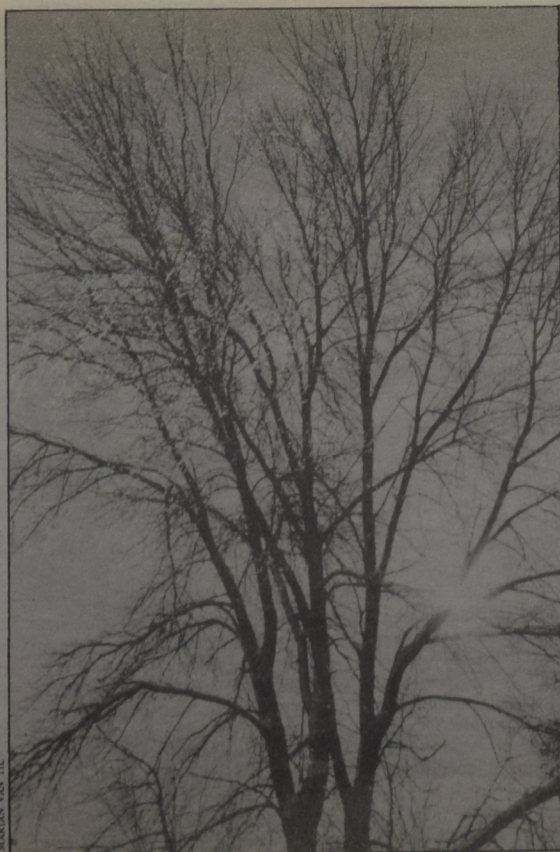
Housekeeping

John Wood

tures are without a voice, but their role in the story of faith is not a small one. Repentance and renewal, Isaiah says, are marked by the regrowth of trees. "This will be for the Lord's renown..." (Isaiah 55:13).

Perhaps this summer we should sit at the feet of a forest giant and listen to the story it can tell. It will remind us that the Lord's care and concern extends not just to our generation, but across the centuries, and to all of his creatures.

John R. Wood teaches environmental science at The King's University College, Edmonton.



MARTIN VAN TIL

The persistent widow and the Lubicon Cree

John Hiemstra

Imagine persistently asking the Canadian government for justice for 56 years without getting it! A World Council of Churches (WCC) eminent person's visit to Alberta this June forcefully reminds Canadians of the Lubicon Cree's long struggle for justice. Church leaders from India, the U.S., Norway and Canada came to try to hasten a just solution.

The Lubicon story stretches back to the end of the last century when government officials signed agreements with native peoples in northern Alberta. The remote Lubicon people were overlooked, however, and did not sign an agreement over their ancestral land. Government indifference and bungling, oil industry opportunism and forest company insensitivity kept the claim unresolved.

Delaying justice is always costly. The initial bureaucratic failings were unjust but did not immediately damage the Lubicon. However, the government decision to allow oil companies to exploit the resources devastated their way of life. Oil development began in 1979, and within four years the number of moose killed annually by the Lubicon had dropped from 200 to 19. Roads, rigs and hundreds of oil wells appeared within a 15 mile radius of the Lubicon village of Little Buffalo. Wildlife disappeared, trap lines were ruined and the environment spoiled. The traditional, self-sufficient economy of the Lubicon collapsed. From 1979-1989, the number of Lubicon on welfare surged to 90 per cent from 10 per cent.

A further blow to the Lubicon way of life began in 1988 when the government leased the contested land to the Daishowa Paper Manufacturing Company. This land is now being clear-cut despite government assurances this would not happen.

What the Lubicon desire

The Lubicon Chief, Bernard Ominayak, clearly outlines what his people do *not* want:

"In essence the Canadian government has offered to build houses for the Lubicon people and to support us forever on welfare — like animals in the zoo who are cared for and fed at an appointed time — in exchange for our acquiescence to the deliberate destruction of our

self-sufficient way of life and the pillage of our resource-rich 10,000 sq. km traditional territory."

But what the Lubicon really want is a just settlement that helps them rebuild their way of life and allows them to escape the welfare dependency imposed on them.

No one is perfectly innocent in these disputes, but it is clear that the Lubicon Cree are being slowly destroyed by this injustice. A host of notable reports witness to this: a WCC fact-finding mission (1983); Hon. E. Davie Fulton's inquiry (1985); a UN human rights committee report (1988); an independent Albertan commission of review (1992); and the recent WCC eminent person's visit (1995).

Taking up the cause of justice

Jesus tells the parable of the persistent widow who kept asking an unfair judge for justice (Luke 18:1-8). Her persistence so irritated him that to avoid being worn down, the judge eventually granted her justice. Contrary to this judge, God says he is eager to see his people "get justice, and quickly!" But we are told to pray constantly for the coming of his kingdom.

Our tendency is to quickly translate this into evangelization of aboriginals. This is a wonderful, but partial, response to the Good News. Why not take a second kingdom-step and stand in solidarity with aboriginal peoples suffering injustice? Does the Good News of the kingdom not include righteousness and justice?

The "Eminent Persons" did not walk into Alberta as "know-it-alls." Their whole purpose was to stand beside this suffering group, and so to hasten justice. By doing this, they showed the world that Christians also care about justice.

As individual Christians, we too can inform ourselves about this and other cases of injustice. We can take time to meet our neighbors who suffer injustice and to learn about their problems and needs. We can write letters to the media and politicians, and encourage our own church leaders to "defend the rights of the poor and needy."

John Hiemstra teaches political science at The King's University College, Edmonton.

JULY 14, 1995

Education

Calvin to establish Abraham Kuyper Chair of Reformed Christianity and Kuyper Fellowship

Phil de Haan

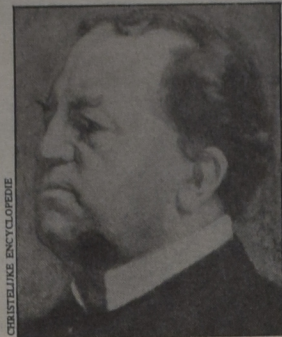
GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Plans are under way to implement an Abraham Kuyper Chair of Reformed Christianity and a Kuyper Foundation program at Calvin College after having been approved by the faculty senate and board of trustees.

Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920) was a Dutch statesman, scholar and theologian whose interests ranged from philosophy and history to political science. He was prime minister of the Netherlands from 1901 to 1905 and previous to that was a Cabinet minister. The endowed chair will recognize a person Calvin officials call "one of the outstanding figures in the history of Dutch Calvinism, indeed of the entire Reformed tradition."

Kuyper founded a political party, a university and two newspapers (which he edited for almost 50 years), and gave encouragement to a system of elementary and secondary Christian education, a labor union and a reinvigorated Reformed church.

In all he did Kuyper was

guided by three convictions: that Christ is Lord over every area of life; that Christians ought, therefore, to engage every domain of their society and culture from a distinctively Christian point of view; and



Abraham Kuyper's vision is still alive.

that such action would serve both to glorify God and to promote human well-being and justice on earth.

Kuyper's ideas and examples run deep at Calvin where the faculty not only incorporate his philosophy in their teaching and

research, but also in their leadership for and support of a variety of Kuyperian-like networks — groups such as the Association of Christian Philosophers, the Conference on Christianity and Literature, Christians in Political Science, and the American Scientific Affiliation.

In addition, the college's archives and regular collections include virtually all of Kuyper's works, as well as significant commentary on them.

Continuing Kuyper's vision more crucial than ever

Officials at Calvin believe the establishment of the Kuyper Chair is crucial to continuing the Reformed tradition at Calvin. A supporting document for the chair says: "In order to strengthen Kuyperian thought in North America the promotion of such thinking needs to be institutionalized.

"Establishing the Abraham Kuyper Chair of Reformed Christianity at Calvin College is important to the college at this

time. The vagaries of change and the multiplicity of competing viewpoints require the college to make concerted work of strengthening this heritage.

"The Abraham Kuyper Chair will provide focus and leadership for that endeavor. Its holders will remind the college and the broader Christian community of the legacy of Kuyper's life and work, and their labors will serve to revitalize that legacy through fresh applications of his principles and procedures. The chair will thus mark out a new avenue by which the college can fulfill its long-standing commitment of carrying the Reformed tradition as a haven and a challenge into North American society."

Occupants of the chair will be scholars who are well-versed in the Kuyperian tradition, have a record of outstanding scholarship, have a research agenda for the future and are committed to the Christian faith.

Since Kuyper worked in so many areas, the Calvin chair will not be restricted to a particular discipline — it will be a "floating" chair. Holders of the

chair will engage in scholarship, teach at Calvin, give public lectures (both at Calvin and at other venues in North America) and supervise the soon-to-be-implemented Kuyper Fellowship.

\$2.5 million endowment

Calvin hopes to establish a \$2.5 million endowment for the Kuyper chair, the interest from which would fund the chair, the fellowship and associated expenses.

The Abraham Kuyper Chair will be the third endowed chair at Calvin College. The Spoelhof Chair, also a floating chair and currently held by philosopher C. Stephan Evans, was the first to be established. It salutes the work of former Calvin president William Spoelhof. The college is also establishing a Paul B. Henry Chair in Christianity and Politics in memory of former Calvin political science professor and U.S. Congressman Paul Henry who died of leukemia.

Christian colleges spring up in Calgary

Gordon Legge

CALGARY — It was meant as an idle comment. But who knows?

"I don't know what it is about Calgary," said Alberta Bible College president Ron Fraser. "It's going to get the reputation of being 'Wheaton North' if it

keeps drawing more Christian colleges here."

Fraser was referring to Wheaton, Ill., just outside of Chicago, which is an important centre in the United States for Christian higher education, especially for evangelicals. He made the comment at a recent

reception announcing the formation of the Calgary Christian College Network.

The announcement came just a week after another Christian college, St. Stephen's, a United Church college based in Edmonton, opened a Calgary campus based at Knox United Church in the downtown core.

Calgary is now home to a range of undergraduate and graduate Christian colleges that run the theological spectrum from conservative to liberal, as well as the denominational spectrum from fundamentalist to mainline Protestant to Roman Catholic.

All of which has happened during the past three years.

The Calgary Christian College Network comprises three post-secondary, undergraduate institutions: Alberta Bible College, which has been in the city since the 1930s; Rocky Mountain College, which opened its doors in Calgary three years ago; and Canadian Nazarene

College, which is celebrating its 75th anniversary by returning this year to Calgary — the city of its founding — from Winnipeg.

The three colleges plan to look for ways to co-operate and collaborate on staff, courses and resources in order to be more efficient and effective. "We can do some things better together than if we were alone," said Rev. Randy Steinwand, president of Rocky Mountain College. He suggested such things as library resources, sharing professors, and marketing continuing education courses.

Not in competition

"If we view Christian colleges in a city like Calgary being in competition, we miss the meaning of the common work of the Kingdom and we also miss the law of critical mass which businesses thrive on today," he says in a college newsletter. "The louder we can pronounce the voice of Chris-

tian higher education in this society, the more awareness it will bring. The more awareness it will bring, the more viable it will become as an education option."

Meanwhile, the Calgary Graduate Theological Network established last year by four Western-based graduate colleges is modifying its approach in the year to come. "We're not going to be operating as a network," said Rev. Charlotte Bates, dean of Calgary's Prairie Graduate School, one of its members. "A couple of members didn't get quite the response they hoped for in the classes," she said. "We'll continue to co-operate where we can."

Meanwhile, Prairie Bible Institute's graduate school, which is based at First Alliance Church, had 165 full- and part-time students during its first year in the city.

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Feature

Sarah and *the rose*



Ron Collings



scene of John Brown's raid.

Not far away, an aging farmer moved about on a hilly slope, looking over many fields, anxiously waiting for the whiteness of snow to disappear. Soon the turning of black soil would start in every field except one. That field the old farmer would leave unplanted, in the hands of the Creator. After all, he thought, this is the Master's creation. Who can do more with it than the One who created this earth and its fertile land?

He acknowledged every

blade of green grass, even those bright yellowish-coarse dandelions which seemed to intertwine with the crabgrass.

What he didn't understand or know was where that red rose might make its next grand appearance. In 1986 it had popped up in the northern corner of the field; in '87 in the southwest corner; and in '88 almost dead in the centre of the spacious field. As the farmer pondered, he patiently waited for the arrival of that single red rose which would crack the black soil's surface with beauty and perfection.

Even though he never understood the mystery of that delicate flower, or its timing in springing to reveal itself, he yearned for the sweet smelling fragrance in its soft silky fibre to fill his nostrils with a scent that makes his heart thump with the thought of Sarah.

Her gentle touch would force his backbone to crimp, recalling

love, a kiss, caressing her soft body, stroking mellow veneer until the sun rose gallantly. All of her character endeavored not only to be strong and resilient, but to surpass that, rising to a higher plateau than one might ever imagine.

Sarah became the most powerful woman in his life. In every way she forfeited herself for him and for others. Always forgiving, she was firm with an inner peace, unblotted and unstained, or so he believed. The thought of Sarah's charisma made the farmer's hands perspire, as he ached for a touch of her gentle hand.

He remembered the red gown, he especially liked. And the long strands of silky auburn hair that fell softly over her small shoulders, down past her tiny waistline, over round buttocks, down alongside the firmness of her legs, all the way to the hardwood floor. Her unwrinkled visage shone through

the blackness of any night, and her sparkling eyes revealed kindness and grace. She was perfect as an angel — full of joy, lovable, completely wholesome. She filled life with harmony.



eyes watered with the thought of God taking Sarah away from him. The awful time of kneeling beside her as she lay dying on the bed.... There was nothing which could be done but watch her fade away.

Even then, Sarah refused to let him hang his head. She had

placed her soft hand under his chin and gently lifted his face to her, their eyes meeting. Even then, in her dark hour, there was a spark of life. Her peace, her sweetness shone through her countenance even at that inevitable moment when she passed through death to what he imagined was a golden stairwell and heaven on the western horizon. She had lain in his strong arms and he had kissed her goodbye.



he farmer didn't know how long he had stood there staring at the northern end where the large oak tree

shaded Sarah's resting place. A part of him had died that night and now lay with her. There was no denying — Sarah had become the very essence of his life, and the burning inferno within him now wouldn't be quenched until his last breath was taken and his heart pumped no more.

Suddenly he saw sunlight ricochet oddly off the snow cover. An image moved out beyond the treeline. He watched its movement in disbelief, observing a woman in a stunning, reddish dress slowly advancing toward him. He seemed to be frozen to the turf, wondering where she had come from. *No one lives within miles of this place*, he thought. But her every movement was like magic, a fluid exquisiteness. Her long ebony hair danced in the southern wind.

Then she stood right in front of him. "Remember me?" She asked softly.

He stared at her for a long moment. She did look familiar but he was unable to remember how he knew her. The softness of her gleaming eyes, the short but broad nose, the thick lips, long gold earrings swinging slightly — all these tugged at his mind. The smoothness of her dark countenance shone triumphantly as if she were a goddess. It must have been several years ago, he thought. But his memory bank seemed closed.

Just then she interrupted his thoughts. "Twenty years ago," she said, as if reading his mind. "In Illinois, remember?"

"Twenty years ago," he whispered outloud, "in Illinois." Pausing for a second. "You can't be that little black girl on Dearborn Street, are you?"

"Yes," she replied softly. "I cannot forget that night's darkness and the cold northern wind howling in between stark naked trees. I was attempting to take a short cut home, not realizing a man was stalking me in the shadows. He was waiting for the right instant, and I was his prey. Remember? She asked him. "I fought and struggled to free myself, but he overpowered me; that is, until you came along and saved me from the devil's hand. I thank you now."

The farmer stood perplexed, eyeing the woman who had come from the treeline. She looked familiar, but he wasn't sure, even after she told him about Illinois.

"Don't tell me you came from Illinois to here, through the cold and snow to say thank you?"

"No," she replied even more softly, "I came at the request of Sarah."

"Sarah," he breathed.

"Sarah," she repeated herself. "Sarah sends her love, and asked me to tell you that she will always love you."

He took a step backwards, almost in shock. "Sarah never told me about you," he told the woman with a quivering tone.

"Well, we do know each other." She spoke with such assurance. "We met one evening and Sarah told me that if I should pass this way, I should keep an eye out for you, and make sure you are well taken care of."

The farmer stood even more dumbfounded in amazement than at first. His mind raced to comprehend this interruption, this woman coming from nowhere. It wasn't like Sarah to keep a secret from him.

He gave the woman a gentle smile and they started to walk up the hilly slope toward the north end. "I'm fortunate," he told her, "very fortunate."

She smiled back at him. "Yes, I know." She barely whispered. "Everything is well with you and the farm has provided for

you." She paused for a short minute. "Everything. But the emptiness of Sarah being gone stays," she observed.

"Yes," he replied, expelling a sigh. "But I'm sure no other women will fill Sarah's place with me."

"I know," she replied softly again.

"Sarah was special, very special, and she made everyone around her special," he elaborated. He paused. "Sarah was life, a heartbeat, always there for me, regardless. She made my world rotate smoothly on its axis." Another pause. "God gave Sarah special gifts and she used everyone of them to its fullest." He smiled just thinking about her. "The chemistry between us was magic, and we were bound together, in vows made before the church and before God, to the very end."

"Yes I know," she answered again. Just then they arrived at the north end. They stood together underneath the big oak tree, beside Sarah's resting place.

"Is she happy?" the farmer asked, not knowing quite why he would ask such a thing of this woman. How would she know?

"Yes, but she misses you very much."

"Really?" he asked in astonishment.

"Really," she replied, as if by some higher authority.

The farmer turned and eyed the headstone where Sarah lay. A tear slowly made its way down his cheek.

He missed her so much.

He took a deep breath before walking to the foot of her grave. He looked over the countryside which Sarah had loved. He smiled in spite of his tears. In this farm he saw Sarah, and in Sarah he saw the farm and the beauty of the countryside. Maybe that was why he had nicknamed this place "Sarah Country."

He turned to face the woman

again.

She was gone. Just like that. Then he caught a glimpse of her near the treeline, heading into the woods. She disappeared as quickly as she had appeared.

He looked down at the snowy ground where the woman in the reddish dress had stood. He again felt amazement. There were no footprints, and as his eyes followed her path, he saw no footprints anywhere in the white snow.

Suddenly he eyed the headstone. A red rose with a

long, leafy stem rested on it. He didn't believe it at first, even though he bent over slowly and stared at it. Then slowly picking it up, he gently held it to his nose and sniffed the powerful aroma. It was as real and fresh as if someone had just plucked it from a garden. The sweet spicy scent enforced its power and beauty. His dead soul seemed to emerge through a dark tunnel to a glorious light that showcased life as he had never seen it before.

He smiled again as he

scanned the distant treeline in search of the woman in the reddish dress. But she was gone. *She must have been an angel,* he mused. Then he smiled.

Ron Collings was born and raised in Illinois before entering the military and going to Vietnam. He married his pen pal named Diana from Milwaukee, Wisc., where they now live. They have five children.



Feature

A necklace of snow



RUTH KERKHAM PHOTO

Ruth H. Kerkham

A car tire is an image that is seared on the minds of many South Africans. It is an image that speaks of merciless brutality and has become an indelible part of a seemingly never-ending culture of violence. The victims are usually those in the townships who are perceived as stooges of the old apartheid government. They are "necklaced": a tire that has been soaked in gasoline is placed around their necks and set alight.

As a South African, an artist and a Christian, I am interested in the images and symbols that are produced in South African art, and in the way in which they relate to the suffering and violence that is so prevalent in my own country (as well as in the rest of the world).

Over the years the tire has

become a well-known symbol in South African art. However, instead of giving voice to the suffering and horror behind the image, it has often been hijacked as a hackneyed symbol of political protest by those with little understanding of this omen of death.

Not waste, but redemption

Art images, being vehicles of communication and expression, have an extraordinary power. They therefore demand an astute and poignant responsibility on the part of the artist, as well as the viewer. In times of violence and injustice, this responsibility should surely show a willingness to embrace the brokenness of the world and to work redemptively towards the binding of its wounds.

Driving through New York

State I came across a deserted pile of tires half-covered with snow. While most North Americans would probably see a pile of waste, I was struck by the profoundly redemptive quality that it seemed to have. The snow on the tires suggested a simultaneous embrace of pain and grace — a *necklace of snow* — in which the reality of pain and horror has laid bare for all who have the heart to feel and the courage to grapple, while gently and unobtrusively being touched by the grace of God.

The beauty of the snow reminded me of the miraculous changes that have indeed taken place in South Africa. But in the image the snow has not smothered the tires. God's grace is not like a blanket of snow that completely covers over the pain and hurt of this world, for such a god would not be our

God who feels and mourns with his own broken creation. We, too, need to learn how to wrestle with the reality of pain — pain that persistently pervades even a "new" South Africa.

Giving voice to pain's reality

Amid the horror and violence of this world it is audacious for the Christian church to expect broken people to reach out their arms to embrace the grace of God, without it reaching out its own arms to embrace their pain. How far we have moved from our Lord's example, where another person's hurt becomes his hurt, to the very core of his being. Giving voice to the reality of pain and suffering should surely be an integral part of the Christian community. Such courage and honesty

would reveal to the world a God who is inextricably bound up in the hurt of humanity, even to the point of his own suffering and death.

There are many reasons for rejoicing in South Africa today. But such thankfulness does not obliterate the extraordinary suffering that has occurred and continues to occur. In South Africa, and indeed in North America too, it is not only a time for rejoicing, but also a time for weeping — a time to wear a *necklace of snow*.

Just as the snow in this image gently embraces the tires, so should we reach out our arms in compassion and embrace the pain of others.

Ruth Kerkham is an aesthetics student from South Africa studying at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto.

Opinion

Canada is not a democracy

Nick Loenen

In recent weeks Jean Chretien has shown he is a traditional politician. In spite of Red Book promises to allow greater independence for MPs, he has cracked the whip to enforce party discipline. Why will he not allow MPs to vote freely on an issue such as gun control?

It is often observed that under our outmoded British electoral system, democracy comes very briefly, once every five years on voting day. Even that is incorrect. The system is designed to give government to a minority. Typically, most people on voting day get a representative and a government they did not vote for. How democratic is that? No wonder many complain that the government does not speak for them.

The system produces parliamentary majorities where there are none among the voters. Bob Rae won majority government with 37 per cent of the popular vote. And Mike Harris's 45 per cent of the vote translated into 63 per cent of the seats. Neither the Harris government nor the Rae government represents the majority view. How democratic is that?

Artificial majorities

Parliamentary majorities should not be manufactured artificially. It is this feature which permits excessive party discipline, destroying the proper role of the House of



Canada's House of Commons in session.

Commons and the provincial legislature. Between elections people have no voice because their representatives have no voice; the representatives are dictated to by their parties. All decisions of importance are made outside of Parliament or legislatures.

In addition, artificial majorities give too much power to the leaders. Responsible government does not exist. Parliament cannot hold government responsible when elected members have forfeited their independence. The result is extremism in public policy. Bob Rae's policies, particularly the reckless deficit of his first budget and his attempts at social engineering were too extreme. Harris' agenda to eliminate the deficit, reduce taxes by 30 per cent and cut

government programs accordingly is another form of extremism.

The Ontario election shows again that we must change the system. We need an electoral system that is democratic, with the potential to give voters more choice, waste fewer votes, bring greater diversity into Parliament and the legislatures, lessen party discipline, weaken the power of the leaders, increase the power of Parliament and the legislatures, restore responsible government, reconnect government to the people and give voters power over their representatives.

STV is better

Electoral systems are human-made rules for translating votes into seats. Most democracies do not use our system. Canada

should leave its colonial past to enter the modern democratic era. Personally, I favor the Single Transferable Vote (STV). It maximizes choice for voters. The STV system uses multi-member districts, usually five. Voters rank candidates in order of preference. Voters need not restrict their choice to candidates of one party, or accept a party list. As a result, the link between voter and representative has the potential to be far stronger than the link between representative and party.

Also, the STV system has proportional results; any group of like-minded voters will receive seats in proportion to their numbers. This will dramatically change the composition and functioning of Parliament and the legislatures. No one party will have a majority.

As in most European democracies, power will be shared, adversarial relations will give way to partnership and decisions by consensus. Public policy will be less open to wild swings for partisan political gain, and more open to serving the long-term public interest.

Protect minorities

Christians, in particular, should welcome and actively promote such changes. Proportional systems, unlike ours, protect public space for minorities. The Christian Heritage Party, for example, will not likely ever elect anyone under the present system, but would under a proportional system. Christians increasingly are a minority. Protecting minority rights is to protect our own rights. But if that sounds too self-serving, protecting minority rights also serves the greater common good.

We must work for more democracy, less party discipline, parties with principled policies, choice for voters, and government that represents all politically significant diversities. The place to start is with our electoral system.

But don't wait for parties to do it; they benefit from the present system. It must start with the people.

Nick Loenen is a former member of the British Columbia legislature. He lives in Richmond, B.C.



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News/Advice

Amish hit by cream board ruling

Nelly Westerhoff

KITCHENER, Ont. — The Old Order Amish may no longer ship their farm-separated cream in cans, the Ontario Cream Producers marketing Board has ruled. Farmers who still ship their product that way have been given the option of selling their cream quota or converting it into milk quota.

This poses a dilemma for the Amish, however: their religious convictions forbid them from using electricity to power coolers and pumps.

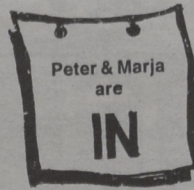
The cream producers' board decision stems from a concern that five to 10 cows is an insufficient number for sustaining a viable farming operation should the price of butter fat drop; if that were to happen, the board believes the situation would likely generate requests for an increase in quota.

As a result of this ruling, an Amish migration to the U.S. could further diminish the communities still remaining in Canada. Almost 20 years ago a similar ruling by the milk marketing board caused a first migration. The families of three districts emigrated to the U.S., where they could continue to ship in cans.

In 1977, at the time of that exodus, the remaining 15 districts, all in Ontario, were assured that they could continue to ship cream in cans indefinitely.

The Old Order Amish first came to Ontario around 1822 to evade military conscription during the Napoleonic era. But their continued existence, their longstanding social economy and culture, seems to be in jeopardy, according to information in *Ram's Horn*, a Toronto-based monthly food newsletter.

For now, say *Ram's Horn* writers Ed Bennett and Brewster Kneen, the Amish horse-drawn buggies and sober clothing still visibly testify to their presence in the Kitchener-Waterloo area. Remarkably self-sufficient, the Old Order Amish shun government services, such as schools, health insurance, welfare and homes for the aged. Despite their independence the Amish contribute significantly to the local social economy, say Bennett and Kneen. The writers strongly suggest that Ontario governing bodies reconsider the decision to implement the new cream ruling.



Christian Reformed scholars don't focus on time of Christ's return

Dear P & M:

Why doesn't the Christian Reformed Church ever speak prophetically about the return of Christ in connection with the present time? Why is the CRC silent about the implications of Israel's having become a state in 1948 as a sign of Christ's imminent return as a Messiah to the Jews and the future building of a new temple?

Dear Signs of the Times:

Since Jesus himself says that "no one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Matt. 24:36), Reformed scholars have not placed much emphasis on predicting the date of Christ's return. Christian Reformed preaching prefers to focus on what we should be busy doing until he comes back. This is also Christ's focus in the Parable of the Ten Virgins, which ends with the warning: "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour" (Matt. 25:13).

It is amazing to see how many books in our local Christian bookstores are devoted to the study of the signs of the times. Authors of these books spend hours making chronologies and drawing charts that connect prophetic Bible writings with 20th century political and economic events.

What a waste of time, especially when you realize that every generation since Christ's ascension into heaven has lived in the end times.

What a waste of scholarship, especially when you consider that the Scriptures being quoted are highly symbolic and figurative.

What a waste of money, especially when you think of what it costs to publish or buy books these days.

Martin Luther said that even if Christ were coming back tomorrow he (Luther) would still plant an apple tree today. That should help us decide where we should put our interest, energy and time.

Dear P & M:

Where is the ark of the covenant now? In the Bible we read that it was hidden. Can you find and tell us where it is stated that the ark was put away?

Dear Lost Ark:

The ark, originally constructed during the Exodus as a receptacle for the Ten Commandments, a pot of Manna and Aaron's rod, functioned as a symbol of God's holy presence. You will find references to the ark in the books of Joshua, Judges, the two books of Samuel and I Kings; it leads the people into the promised land, falls into the hands of the Philistines and is eventually placed in the temple in Jerusalem by King Solomon.

The last mention of its existence occurs in II Chronicles when Josiah re-installs it in the sanctuary as part of his reforms during his reign from 639-608 B.C. After that there is no further Old Testament reference to the ark. In all likelihood it was lost when Jerusalem was destroyed in 587 B.C. According to the historian Josephus, there was no ark in the second temple when it was rebuilt after the return from exile.

No one knows what ultimately happened to the ark of the covenant, not even Steven Spielberg, the famous film maker who produced the movie *Indiana Jones: Raiders of the Lost Ark*. The Bible doesn't say anywhere that the ark was hidden or put away. II Chronicles 35:3 is the last historical mention of its existence.

Write to: P & M

c/o Christian Courier

4-261 Martindale Road

St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of Herman de Jong, Bill Lidkea, Tom Zeyl, Marian Van Til and Bert Witvoet.



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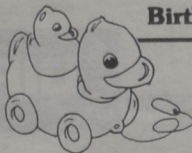


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Classifieds

Classified Rates	Births	Marriages	Anniversaries	Anniversaries
<p>(Revised February 1, 1995)</p> <p>Births \$25.00</p> <p>Marriages & Engagements \$40.00</p> <p>Anniversaries \$45.00</p> <p>2-column anniversaries . \$90.00</p> <p>Obituaries \$45.00</p> <p>Notes of thanks \$35.00</p> <p>Birthdays \$40.00</p> <p>All other one-column classified advertisements: \$15.00 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is \$15.00. Letter under file number \$35.00 extra. Photos: \$25.00 additional charge.</p> <p>Note: All rates shown above are GST inclusive</p> <p>ATTENTION!</p> <p>a) <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.</p> <p>b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is not acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.</p> <p>c) Photographs sent by fax are not acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.</p> <p>d) <i>Christian Courier</i> will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.</p> <p>e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to five column inches. <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of \$15.00 per column inch (GST incl.).</p> <p>NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS</p> <p>We offer a one-year subscription for only \$25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the <i>Christian Courier</i> and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose \$25.00 and the couple's correct address.</p> <p>Christian Courier 4-261 Martindale Rd. St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1 Phone: (905) 682-8311 Fax: (905) 682-8313</p>	 <p>DRENTH (GRIFFIOEN):</p> <p>"The Lord is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made" (Ps. 145:13b).</p> <p>We, Marty, Margaret and Derek, give praise to the Lord for entrusting to our care a son and brother,</p> <p>DAVID MARTIN</p> <p>on June 5, 1995.</p> <p>David is loved and welcomed by grandparents Pauline Drenth of St. Catharines, Ont., Jake and Audrey Griffioen of Cannington, Ont., great-grandparents Mrs. Evelyn Drenth of Grimsby, Ont., and Mr. and Mrs. Henry and Corrie Diemer of St. Catharines, Ont., and Mrs. A. Griffioen of Hilversum, the Netherlands.</p>	<p>STEENBEEK/WONDER:</p> <p>"Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us" (Eph. 5:1,2).</p> <p>Andy and Ina Steenbeek and Jim and Hennie Wonder thank the Lord for uniting their children</p> <p>SONYA NADINE STEENBEEK and DAVID HAROLD WONDER</p> <p>They will exchange their marriage vows on Saturday, July 22, 1995, D.V., at 1:30 p.m., in the Ancaster Chr. Ref. Church.</p> <p>Future address: 53 McNaughton West, Apt. 103, Chatham, ON N7L 5B9</p>	 <p><i>Congratulations to Willem and Anna Maria Schinkel (nee Jonkers) on the occasion of their 65th anniversary!</i></p>	<p>Oudewater Nepean the Neth. Ont. 1930 July 24 1995</p> <p>"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want" (Ps.23).</p> <p>With praise and thanks to God, we announce the 65th wedding anniversary of our much loved parents, grandparents and great-grandparents</p> <p>WILLEM and ANNA MARIA SCHINKEL (nee JONKERS)</p> <p>We rejoice in what God has given us through you mom and dad, and we pray that God's faithful love will continue to surround you.</p> <p>Jack & Rose Schinkel — Renfrew Bob & Eva Schinkel — London Tina & Bill Doelman — Ottawa Jerry & Manja Schinkel — Montreal Gerda Huibers — Brockville Mary & Henry Venema — Cobden Audrey & Cor Schijff — Navan Bill Schinkel — White Lake David & Linda Schinkel — Brockville</p> <p>also 25 grandchildren and 29 great-grandchildren.</p> <p>In honor of the occasion we will have a family reunion at the Doelman's cottage, D.V., July 22, 1995, and a "tea" will be held at Viewmount Senior Citizens' Apt.</p> <p>Address: 104-220 Viewmount Dr., Nepean, ON K2E 7M5</p>
<p>Birthdays</p> <p>Open house in celebration of CATHERINE SLOTEGRAAF'S 80th birthday at the Clinton District Christian School Princess Street Clinton, Ont. on Saturday, July 22, 1995 from 2-5 p.m. Best wishes only.</p>	<p>BUESINK (nee LAMMERS): Happy Birthday</p> <p>"I will sing of the Lord's great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations" (Ps.89:1).</p> <p>With thanks to God in our hearts, we hope to celebrate the 80th birthday of our mother, grandmother and great-grandmother</p> <p>ALEIDA CATHARINA BUESINK (nee LAMMERS)</p> <p>on July 25, 1995, D.V.</p> <p>We, her children, thank her for her steadfast and godly example and pray that our heavenly Father will continue to care for her and guide her.</p> <p>With love from all of us:</p> <p>Betsy & Warner Boer — Simcoe, Ont. Jo & Wytse van Dijk — Hamilton, Ont. Willy & Larry DeKoter — London, Ont. George & Marilyn Buesink (Zonder-van) — Strathroy, Ont. John & Lillian Buesink (DeJong) — Hamilton, Ont. Murray & Denise Buesink (Wamsteeker) — Lethbridge, Alta. Fred & Marianne Buesink (Byl) — Burnaby, B.C. Ena & Bastian DePeuter — Thunder Bay, Ont. Bernice & Stan Baker — Oshawa, Ont.</p> <p>39 grandchildren (one deceased), six spouses and six great-grandchildren.</p> <p>Her address is: 400 Dominion St., Apt. 1, Strathroy, ON N7G 3G8</p> <p><i>Look for Peter and Marja on page 16...</i></p>	<p>Anniversaries</p>  <p><i>Congratulations to Cornelis and Wytje Van den Bor (nee van Veenhuizen) on the occasion of their 65th anniversary!</i></p> <p>1930 1995</p> <p>"Every good and perfect gift is from above" (James1:17).</p> <p>On July 16, 1995, the Lord willing, we will celebrate with our parents their 65th wedding anniversary.</p> <p>CORNELIS and WYNTJE VAN DEN BOR (nee VAN VEENHUIZEN)</p> <p>now residing in Holland Chr. Homes, 7900 McLaughlin Rd. S., R.R. #10, Covenant Tower, Penthouse #8, Brampton, ON L6V 3N2, Phone (905) 451-3551.</p> <p>We are so thankful that the Lord has blessed them with so many years together.</p> <p>It is our wish that He will continue to bless and watch over them.</p> <p>Love from all of us.</p> <p>Your children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandson.</p>		<p><i>Look for our dates of publication during the summer on page 23...</i></p>

Classifieds

Anniversaries	Anniversaries	Obituaries	Obituaries	Job Opportunities
		<p>Mildam, Fr. Grimsby, Ont. Aug. 1, 1914 - June 29, 1995 "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Thy name in all the earth" (Ps. 8). On June 29, 1995, the Lord took into his eternal home our wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother ROMKJE DEHAAN-DYKSTRA (JONGSMA) in her 81st year. Loving wife of Pieter Dehaan for 15 years. Dear mother of: Richard & Ina Dykstra — Kitchener Arnold & Ann Dykstra — Burlington Shirley & Jerry Bulthuis — Hamilton Gerard & Leida Dykstra — Hamilton Dear stepmother of: John & Alice Dehaan — Smithville Jenny & Andy Pegels — Welland Piet & Nellie Dehaan — Smithville Dearest grandma of 41 grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Predeceased by her first husband Gerrit Dykstra in 1955. Goodness and mercy all my life Shall surely follow me And in God's house forevermore My dwelling place shall be. (Ps. 23). Correspondence address: Pieter Dehaan, Shalom Manor, 12 Bartlett Ave. #228, Grimsby, ON L3M 4N5</p>	<p>On Tuesday, May 30, 1995, at the Seven Oaks Hospital, LEUNTJE VAN HEYST (nee DIELEMAN) went to be with the Lord in whom she trusted. She died as she lived, with a smile on her face. She was predeceased by her husband in 1985; her grandson, Allan in 1983; one sister and two brothers. Mrs. Van Heyst was born in the Netherlands on Aug. 31, 1905. In 1931 she married Nicolaas Van Heyst and together they raised seven children. In 1950, they came to Canada and farmed for many years in the Emo, Ont., area before retiring in Winnipeg. She was a loving, caring person whose life was devoted to the service of her family and people around her. Proverbs 31: 10-30 describes her. She is survived by her children: Karl & Joan — Winnipeg Don & Jeanette — Brandon Peter & Leona — Emo Adrian & Pat — Murray, Utah Sarina & John Smid — Delta Nellie & Ray Anema — Oakbank Wilma & Arend Wielinga — Emo 38 grandchildren and 61 great-grandchildren. She is also survived by one sister, Tannie Tuit, in the Netherlands. Funeral service was held at Green Acres Funeral Chapel on Wednesday, May 31, 1995, at 2 p.m., with Rev. C. Bishop officiating.</p>	<p>DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRIES The Maranatha Chr. Ref. Church of Woodstock, Ont., is seeking a YOUTH DIRECTOR, who can lead, teach, recruit, motivate and coach and whose task it will be to lead our young people to an acknowledgement of Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. For further information contact: Mr. Harry Klingenberg, chairperson of search committee, 232 Bowerhill Road, Woodstock, ON N4S 2N4. Phone: (519) 539-1326.</p>
<p><i>Congratulations to Henk and Alie Vos (nee Hartman) on the occasion of their 50th anniversary!</i></p>				
<p>Hoogeveen Brampton the Neth. Ont. 1945 August 9 1995 With thanks to God, we hope to celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents HENK and ALIE VOS (nee HARTMAN) Jane & Michael Moore — Toronto Alex — Halifax Megan — Toronto Oliver — Peterborough John & Shirley Vos — Bradenton, Fla. Eric, David Home address: 7900 McLaughlin Rd. S., Apt. H308, Brampton, ON L6V 3N2</p>	<p>Obituaries "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him." ANNIE DUNNEWOLD (KLEIN-GELTINK) of Hardwood Hill in Nova Scotia, passed away peacefully in her sleep on Saturday, June 17, 1995, at the age of 74. She is survived by her husband Bert Dunnewold, six children and 16 grandchildren. Ben & Christine Klein-Geltink — Cambridge, Ont. Cindy & Steve, Tammy, Denise, Ken John & Mary Beth Klein-Geltink — Ingersoll, Ont. Greg, Julie Jane Klein-Geltink — Truro, N.S. Carl & Wilma Klein-Geltink — Woodstock, Ont. Christopher, Darryl, Nathan, Michelle Gerald & Rita Klein-Geltink — Cambridge, Ont. Brian, Mark, Kevin, Bradley Bruce & Ida Klein-Geltink — Guelph, Ont. Matthew, Kristen Two stepchildren and six stepgrandchildren, Hank & Herma Dunnewold — Hardwood Hill, N.S. Hilda, Sarah, Albert, Jackie Rika & Martin Cheverie — East Point, P.E.I. Kristen, Chelsey Dear aunt to Tony & Dawnelda Prinsen Anja, Gerhard, Kathleen Funeral services were held on Tuesday, June 20, 1995, in Pictou, N.S. A public grave side service was held at South East Hope Cemetery in Shakespeare, Ont., on Saturday, June 24, 1995. Correspondence address: Mr. B. Dunnewold, R.R. #2, Scotsburn, NS B0K 1R0</p>	<p>Feb. 13, 1918 - May 29, 1995 Praise the Lord. The Lord called home into his heavenly palace FLORENCE VANDERLINDE (DE JONG) at the age of 77 of Samia, Ont., on Monday, May 29, 1995. Beloved wife of the late Earl Henry Borger (1963) and Willem Vanderlinde (1992). Dear mother of: Boukje & Piet Visser — the Netherlands Henry & Marie Borger — Ramsay, N.J. Peter & Judy Borger — Emo, Ont. Arie & Audrey Borger — Emo, Ont. Nick & Lena Borger — Strathroy, Ont. Harold & Diane Borger — Samia, Ont. John & Mae Vanderlinde — Samia, Ont. Lammie & Harry Joosse — Samia, Ont. Marion & Sjoerd Van Wyk — Clinton, Ont. Jeanette & George Antonides — Putnam, Ont. Loving grandmother of 34 grandchildren and 36 great-grandchildren. Also survived by one sister Sieta and Harry Broes of the Netherlands. The funeral service was held on Thursday, June 1, 1995, at Second Chr. Ref. Church, Samia, Ont. Interment in Lakeview Cemetery.</p>	<p>Suddenly, the Lord called unto Himself BERT VERWEY at his home on Thursday, June 29, 1995, in his 77th year. Beloved husband of Martha of Hamilton, Ont. Dear father of: Gilbert Hank & Sandra John & Roberta Jerry & Debi Jean & Martin Aalders Marja Groenevelt-Verwey Joanne Verwey Brother of Johan of the Netherlands, and predeceased by his brother Co. Beloved grandfather of 19 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Bert worked with the H.S.R. for over 20 years and was a member of the Dutch Canadian Legion, Hamilton Branch. Funeral service was held on Wednesday, July 5, 1995, at First Chr. Ref. Church, Hamilton, Ont. Correspondence address: Mrs. Martha Verwey, 82 Whitney Ave., Hamilton, ON L8S 2G5</p>	<p>Employment Wanted Hardworking son of large South-western Ontario dairy farmer seeking employment in Western Canada. Have plenty of experience in every aspect of dairy farming and working with farm machinery and am willing to work with any animals. Can be reached at (519) 523-9429 any time.</p>
<p>Obituaries And they shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (Ps.23). As a result of a tragic car accident on June 10, 1995, PAUL DOUGLAS TRUEMNER age 38 and JEREMY PAUL TRUEMNER age 18 went to their heavenly home. They both joyfully professed Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Beloved husband and son of Wilma Truemer (Vanderlaan). Dear father and brother of Amy and Tara. Jeremy was a special friend of Amy Zwart. Dear son-in-law and grandson of Henny and Brant Bylsma, Strathroy, Ont. Dear brother-in-law and nephew to: Sadie & Henry Post Wendy & William Westerik Albert & Jean Vanderlaan Tina & Bert Visscher Correspondence address: Mrs. Wilma Truemer, R.R. #3, Exeter, ON N0M 1S5</p>			<p>For Rent 2-Bedroom cottage for rent near Gravenhurst, Ont., 5 min. from Sparrow Lake, Gull Lake and Kahshe Lake. \$250 per week. Call (705) 689-9149</p>	<p>Church News Christian Reformed Church Classis meeting: — Classis Chatham will meet in regular session on Tuesday, Sept. 12, 1995, at First Chr. Ref. Church, Chatham, Ont. All agenda materials should reach Jan H.G. Vandergeest, Stated Clerk, by July 31, 1995. — Classis Huron will meet, D.V., in regular session on Wednesday, Sept. 13, 1995, at 9:30 a.m., in the Goderich Chr. Ref. Church, located on 321 Suncoast Drive E. All agenda materials should reach Hilbert Rumph, Stated Clerk, Box 215, Drayton, ON N0G 1P0 no later than August 9, 1995. Phone: (519) 638-2053, Fax: (519) 638-2239. Times of worship: — Good News Chr. Ref. Church, London, Ont., worships Sunday mornings at 10:30, and, for this summer through September, will have Sunday evening pot-luck picnics at 6 p.m., followed by a time of praise, meditation, and sharing.</p>
<p align="right"><i>See page 23 for our Calender of Events</i></p>				

Classifieds

Personal	Personal	Personal	Job Opportunities	Job Opportunities
<p>Attention: CRC Pastors</p> <p>Would you like to preach in Nova Scotia? If you're travelling/vacationing in Eastern Canada, please consider doing the Chr. Ref. Church in Kentville, N.S., a big favor! Please contact Gerrit Tenyenhuus at (902) 538-9533.</p>	<p>MAY/JUNE 1995</p> <p>THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUESTED TO CONTACT THE CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE NETHERLANDS:</p> <p>=====</p> <p>van den BERG, Hendrik, born March 7, 1929 in Rotterdam, emigrated to Canada: July 15, 1957.</p> <p>de BOER, Auromarus, born August 13, 1930 in Hoogkarspel.</p> <p>BRUYNES-NAGEL, Elly, born August 19, 1935, last known address in the Netherlands: Zandstraat 41, Son, emigrated to Canada June 8, 1971.</p> <p>BUIZER, Dingeman Wouter, born September 28, 1931, last known address in the Netherlands: Landweg 25, Bergen (NH), emigrated to Canada May 23, 1957.</p> <p>van DONGEN, Johannes Richardus, born July 9, 1930, last known address in the Netherlands: Langenboomseweg 4, Zeeland, emigrated to Canada April 13, 1960.</p> <p>van DUREN, Jan, born October 16, 1930, last known address in the Netherlands: G. van Prinstererstraat 10, Heerlen, emigrated to Waterloo, Ontario.</p> <p>FRANSE, Wilhelm Elias, born August 8, 1930, last known address in the Netherlands: Voorstraat 18, Vlissingen, emigrated to Canada August 11, 1970.</p> <p>GLADSTONE-de GEEST, Johanna Maria, born November 24, 1922 in Amsterdam, emigrated to Canada: October 12, 1946.</p> <p>GOOSSENS, Petrus M., born May 23, 1930, last known address in the Netherlands: Sniederslaan 52, Bladel, emigrated to Canada July 17, 1958.</p> <p>van HERWAARDE, Theodorus Johannes, born March 2, 1931, last known address in the Netherlands: Botermarkt 25R, Haarlem.</p> <p>HUIZINGA-MULDER, Mr. and Mrs., born January 8, 1927 and April 26, 1929 respectively, last known address in Canada: 630 Parkhill Road West, Apartment 405, Peterborough, Ontario.</p> <p>KOK, J.A., born July 31, 1930, last known address in the Netherlands: Kapelstraat 14, Arnhem, emigrated to Canada July 19, 1960.</p> <p>KOSTER, Cornelis Geert Reinder, born October 9, 1968, emigrated to Canada: November 18, 1993.</p> <p>KOX, Arnoldus Antonius, born July 8, 1930, last known address in the Netherlands: Blaarthemseweg 62, Eindhoven, emigrated to Canada May 11, 1959.</p> <p>LAMERS, Johannes, born October 3, 1930 in Heerlen.</p> <p>LOPIES, Johannes Frederik, born October 29, 1930, last known address in the Netherlands: Abbenbroeksestraat 5, Schiedam, emigrated to Canada November 22, 1966.</p> <p>MEIJER, Jacob, born June 24, 1930, emigrated to Canada: May 15, 1954.</p>	<p>MOLENKAMP, Johan Gijsbert, born December 21, 1946 in Pare Pare, Indonesia.</p> <p>OOSTEROM-van de LEUR, Mrs. E.M., born February 2, 1914, last known address in Canada: Audrey Drive 2119, Port Coquitlam, B.C.</p> <p>REITH, Rudolf, born July 9, 1930 in Rotterdam, emigrated to Canada: July 3, 1957.</p> <p>SCHENK, Gerardus Theodorus, born October 12, 1930, last known address in the Netherlands: Adm. de Ruyterstraat 99, Aalten, emigrated to Canada July 8, 1959.</p> <p>YERBEEK, Willem, born May 27, 1931 in Vlaardingen, emigrated to Canada: December 4, 1958.</p> <p>YERLINDE, Jacobus Abraham, born October 11, 1906 in Terneuzen, last known address in Canada: Pape Avenue, Toronto.</p> <p>VIS, Maria Jacoba, born September 9, 1941 in Wateringen, last known address in Canada: p/a G. Quecker, 337 North Daim, Asylda, Ontario.</p> <p>VOORHOEVE, Hester Henriette, born June 9, 1930 in Nijmegen.</p> <p>ZWARTS, Soemantri, born June 14, 1940 in Katwijk, last known address in the Netherlands: Hugo de Grootstraat 3, Leiden, emigrated to Canada December 9, 1963.</p> <p>CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE NETHERLANDS 1 DUNDAS STREET W., SUITE 2106 TORONTO, ONTARIO M5G 1Z3 TEL.: (416) 598-2520</p>	<p>Career Opportunity</p> <p>Aldershot Greenhouses Ltd.</p> <p>A well-established operation, has immediate openings for</p> <p>GROWERS</p> <p>to work in our pot mum and pot rose production. The applicant should be eager to work and self-motivated. Experience and/or education in horticulture is an asset.</p> <p>Interested persons should send a resume to:</p> <p>Aldershot Greenhouses Ltd. 1135 Gallagher Road, Burlington, ON L7T 2M7 or fax: (905) 632-4022</p> <p>For further information contact Len VanderLugt or Earl Schouten at (905) 632-9272 or (905) 689-1774.</p>	<p>Stewardship Officer</p> <p>We seek a financial planning/gift planning advisor to the Christian community. Post-secondary degree and related experience preferred. Christian commitment, personal stewardly lifestyle, good inter-personal and public speaking skills are required. 3/4 time Sept.-May. Possibly full-time after.</p>
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Along with proven experience as a publisher and editor, the person will share the theological and ministry commitment of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada in its task to serve the evangelical community in Canada as a voice and means of co-operation, to the end that the witness of Jesus Christ will be made to our society.

Please submit written resume to:

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Box 8800, Station B, Willowdale, ON M2K 2R6
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Please contact Arend Benjamins at (519) 475-4627
 or John Klein-Geltink at (519) 485-3271.
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Pastor Koole will hold his farewell service, D.V., on
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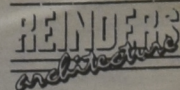
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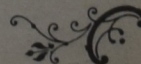
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AUGUST 17, 1995 SENIOR CITIZENS' DAY

at Lakewood Christian Campgrounds, Forest, Ont.
Coffee at 10 a.m.

Speaker: Rev. Harry A. Vander Windt.
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Calendar of Events

July 15 Fifth "Wieringermeer Picnic," 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Upper Queen's Park, Stratford, Ont. Please bring your own lunch!

July 17-21 "Summerfest," at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich. Info.: (616) 957-6142.

July 23 Dutch worship service, led by Rev. John G. Klomps, 3 p.m., CRC, Ancaster, Ont.

Aug. 4-7 "ICS Ontario Family Conference," featuring Elaine Storkey (Christian Impact, London, England) and others, at HDCHS, Ancaster, Ont. Info.: (416) 979-2331.

Aug. 16 Ligonier Ministries of Canada presents "Spirit Wars," in Guelph, Ont., with Dr. Peter Jones, of California's Westminster Theological Seminary. Call 1-800-563-3529 to register.

Aug. 16-19 "The Arts, Community and Cultural Democracy," a Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich., -hosted conference. Keynote speaker: Calvin Seerveld and Nicholas Wolterstorff. Sponsored by Calvin, Dordt, ICS and Free University. Info.: (616) 957-6488.

Aug. 17 "Senior Citizens' Day," at Lakewood Christian Campground, Forest/Camlachie, Ont. Coffee at 10 a.m. Speaker: Rev. Harry A. Vander Windt. Bring your own lunch and lawnchairs.

Aug. 18-19 Ligonier Ministries of Canada presents "Upon This Rock," in North York, Ont., with R.C. Sproul, Peter Jones and David Wells. Call 1-800-563-3529 to register.

Aug. 19 25th Anniversary reunion, Beacon Chr. High School, St. Catharines, Ont. For info, phone Fran Versluis-Koole at (905) 934-5761 or fax (905) 937-1130.

Aug. 26 Banquet to mark the occasion of the retirement of Pastor John Koole, who has completed 25 years of ministry in the CRC. Social at 6 p.m., followed by dinner at 7 p.m., in the John Knox Chr. School, Woodstock, Ont. Pastor Koole will preach his farewell service at 10 a.m., Sunday, Aug. 27, in the Ingersoll CRC. Info.: (519) 475-4627 or 485-3271.

Aug. 27 Dutch worship service, led by Rev. Jerry J. Hoytema, 3 p.m., CRC, Ancaster, Ont.

Sept. 19-24 Ligonier Ministries of Canada presents "Upon This Rock," in Charlottetown, PEI, Sydney, N.S., and Moncton, N.B., with Rev. Eric Alexander (Glasgow, Scotland). Call 1-800-563-3529 to register.

Nov. 3 "Christian Festival Concert" by the OCMA choirs and brass, directed by Leendert Kooij at 8 p.m., Roy Thomson Hall, Toronto, Ont. Participating are Andre Knevel and Dirk Out (organ and piano), Maja Roodveldt (soprano), the concert band "Euphonia," and the "Kooij Sisters." Tickets and info.: (416) 636-9779.

**To all Christian Courier
subscribers and advertisers:**

**The Christian Courier office will be closed for
vacation from July 24 thru August 7. Our office will
re-open Tuesday August 8.**

**Advertising deadlines are
as follows:**

Issue dated:	Advertising deadline (4 p.m.):
July 14	July 5
July 28	July 12
August 18	August 9
August 25	August 16

**Only four issues will
be published during
July and August:
July 14, 28,
August 18 and 25**

Vacation 1995

Your co-operation is appreciated. We wish you all a relaxing holiday.
Stan de Jong, Manager

Christian Courier will not publish July 7, 21, August 4 and 11

News

Christian, Jewish, Muslim leaders issue 'call to conscience' re: refugees

Marian Van Til, with files from Andrew Brouwer

TORONTO — Most Canadians view themselves as "tolerant and generous people." But that's not necessarily so, says a "call to conscience," a statement on refugees signed and issued in Toronto on June 27 by 30 leaders of the three major religions in Canada.

One of the signatories, historian Irving Abella has documented "how Canada had the worst record in the Western world in accepting Jewish refugees [during World War II]." He lays out the evidence in the book *None Too Many*, co-authored with Harold Troper.

"Many Canadians were shocked to hear this," the conscience statement admits. "Nevertheless, it is true that a senior civil servant, when asked by a reporter about the number of Jewish refugees Canada would accept, replied saying, 'None is too many,'" says A Call to Conscience: A Statement on Refugees from Faith Communities of Canada.

The policy was "effectively implemented because politicians pandered to racist groups

in the country, because the vast majority of the population did not know and did not seek to find out the truth of the refugee situation, and because many official church bodies did not make a vigorous effort to speak out."

That bit of history is relevant because 50 years after the end of World War II, Canadians are increasingly complaining about refugees, but "it is our moral duty to speak about the reality of Canada's treatment of refugees. We will not let this happen again," said the church leaders.

'Afraid' of refugees?

However, Canada is accepting fewer and fewer refugees. The World Refugee Survey 1994 documents "increased pressure to keep would-be refugees at home 'for their own good.'" Canada received less than 20,000 refugees in 1993, and the number continues to drop.

Increasingly, too, Canada accepts those immigrants who have financial resources which will aid the Canadian economy. A July 15, 1993, internal memo from Meyer Burstein, director



A street market in Hong Kong — Canada has a preference for business immigrants from countries such as this.

of strategic planning and research with Immigration Canada, for example, stated that there would be an expected increase in "landings" from Hong Kong and Sri Lanka. But there is a preference for Hong Kong immigrants rather than Sri Lankan refugees because "the propensity for and financial ability to sponsor applications could be greater for immigrants landed from Hong Kong since a large portion of those were independent immigrants or business immigrants..." In addition, the newly instituted \$975 "right of landing fee," required of each applicant over 18 years old is "a particularly odious measure to impose upon refu-

gees who seek Canada's protection and rely on Canada's international humanitarian and compassionate reputation," says the Inter-Church Committee for Refugees.

Must welcome the stranger

The inter-faith leaders who signed the Call to Conscience want Canadians to oppose such attitudes and actions. "As people who have been shaped by the biblical tradition," said the Jewish, Muslim and Christian leaders, "we are called to welcome the stranger as we would welcome God in our midst. We reject attempts to portray refugees as problems

rather than as people who bring great promise to our country." The statement concludes: "It is morally wrong to make scapegoats of these people. It is wrong to think that [our national boundaries] are threatened by the relatively small number of people who enter our country seeking refuge. Our boundaries have been and are being erased by vast transnational economic forces, by freer trade, by global communications.

"We will speak and act on behalf of those whose lives and human rights are threatened at this time. We owe this to those who lost their lives [in the Holocaust and since then]. We owe it to ourselves and to future generations — to become a nation we can hope in."

Among those who signed the Call to Conscience were representatives of the Christian Reformed, Anglican, Evangelical Lutheran, Coptic Orthodox, Catholic, United and Presbyterian churches; representatives of the Canadian Jewish Congress and several Jewish congregations; and, as co-signatories, representatives of several Muslim groups and various human rights groups.

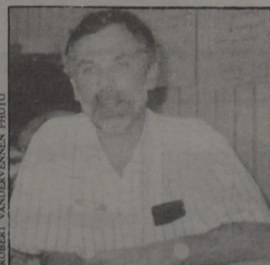
Canadian churches reaffirm commitment to displaced people

Robert VanderVennen

TORONTO — The Bible's phrase "I was a stranger and you took me in" still speaks strongly to Canadian Christians, if the work of the ecumenical Inter-Church Committee for Refugees is any indication.

The committee, of which the Christian Reformed Church is a member, was recently asked to re-think the international migration of persons fleeing their home countries. The inter-church group drew up a discussion paper and called a brainstorming consultation of 40 persons active in refugee issues.

The first thing the consultation noted is that the world situation has become more complex. Today one speaks of "migrants," not just refugees. The 1951 Geneva Convention defined refugees as people who have fled persecution based on religion, race, political opinion or membership in a social group or nationality, and who are outside their own countries' bor-



Ted Hyland, chair of the Inter-Church Committee for Refugees

ders. More recently, groups in Africa and Latin America have extended this definition by including people who have fled civil war, armed conflict or generalized violence.

The committee's commitment, therefore, now extends to all displaced people, not just the 1951 "convention refugees."

Addressing the problems that force migration

In a keynote statement Susan Davis, executive director of

Jewish Immigrant Aid Canada, called attention to displaced persons in Eastern Europe, especially the former Soviet Union.

In another address, Bonnie Greene, director of the "Church and Society" program of the United Church, said we need to change our concepts and think about the moral needs of displaced persons. And we need to reflect on how churches can be active in preventing the problems overseas that force people to migrate from their homes.

The world's problems are no longer "out there" in foreign countries, added Greene. Those problems come to Canada with the people from those countries. The question is whether Canadian churches are ministering to the emotional needs of incoming migrants and to people who are in transit.

Today there are about 16.3 million refugees in the world, with most of their troubles start-

ing in Africa and the Middle East. There are also about 30 million people who have been uprooted to different parts of their own countries. Altogether there are an estimated 70 to 85 million migrants worldwide. Migration is always people's last resort, and most people want to return home as soon as they can. That option is almost always the best solution to their uprootedness, it was noted.

Overcoming ecclesiastical bureaucracy

One of the biggest problems facing Canada's churches in ministering to migrants is their own bureaucracies and problems of communication between different agencies. Beyond that are developing effective strategies to address migrant ministries, communicating the need to help church members and the general Canadian population. In the face of the increasing individualism and inward-looking

of our age, getting people — even Christians — motivated to help is difficult.

The position paper drawn up by the committee makes an effective biblical and theological case for ministry to migrants. Exodus 23 is quoted: "You shall not oppress the alien...because you know how it feels to be an alien; you were aliens yourselves in Egypt." Abraham and Sarah became migrants, and God's people were exiled in Babylon.

"The presence of refugees and migrants in our world is a challenge and sign of contradiction," says the paper, "a judgment against a world constructed on greed, violence and self-interest." Therefore we Christians must be present with and listen to the experiences of the poor, the marginalized and the oppressed in our society.